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HISTORY OF THE PARSIS

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Yours Sincerely
Dosabhai Framji Karaka

HISTORY

OF

THE PARSIS

INCLUDING

THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGION,

AND PRESENT POSITION

BY

DOSABHAI FRAMJI KARAKA, C.S.I.

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ETC. ETC.

WITH COLOURED AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

Albert Edward, Prince of Wales,

THESE VOLUMES,

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF
A COMMUNITY WHICH DESCENDS FROM THE ANCIENT PERSIANS,
AND CLAIMS TO BE THE MOST LOYAL AMONG THE
MANY MILLIONS OF EASTERN SUBJECTS
WHO RECOGNISE THE BENEFICENT SWAY OF
THE BRITISH CROWN,

ARE,

WITH HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S MOST GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

DEDICATED,

In Commemoration of His Auspicious Visit to India,

BY HIS MOST HUMBLE AND GRATEFUL SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

In placing before the great English reading public this history of my own race and people I feel that I shall not have to apologise for having selected a subject in which they feel no interest. The name of Parsi is known not merely for the recent claim of loyalty to the British Government, although we are content to make that our best claim, but also by the honourable position which some of the greatest English writers have accorded the Parsis, or ancient Persians, among the leading nations of the world. If explanation is due from me, I feel rather that it should be of a personal character as to why I have undertaken this work, and not as to whether the history of the Parsis should be recorded in an ample manner from the early period of sovereign independence down to the present day of prosperous security and enlightened contentment.

A question which covers so wide a field and which deals with such a variety of subjects seems to call for some explanatory introduction which may

not merely interest the reader in what is to follow, but also reveal, as far as possible, the nature of this history which embraces the earliest period of mythical events and the present day of advanced civilisation. I should hesitate even on the threshold of my work did I not recall what an English poet had written about my people in the early part of the present century:

> "But none, of all who owned the Chief's command,
> Rushed to that battle-field with bolder hand
> Or sterner hate than Iran's outlaw'd men,
> Her Worshippers of Fire." [1]

And that passage refers to a time when the greatness of the Parsis had become a thing of the past, and when, exiles in Khorassan, they strove to make some headway against the Mahomedan invaders and conquerors of their country. It would be a pleasing theme to dwell upon the remarkable and flourishing period which preceded that calamity; but I have been compelled by practical considerations to pass over those early and glorious ages as briefly as possible. It is of the existing Parsi community that I have to speak, and little beyond a reference to the earlier Persia, of which naturally we are so proud, is either possible or attempted in the following pages. Those who are curious on the subject will find ample details in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, and in more

[1] Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

than one eloquent passage of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall.* The name Parsi is now identified rather with good citizenship and commercial activity than with the martial and administrative attributes necessary to the supporters of a great empire. My more important task commences in reality with the flight of the Persians from their country, when they abandoned thoughts of dominion sooner than sacrifice their most cherished religious convictions and their independence and self-respect.

The Persian or Parsi fugitives, after undergoing numerous hardships and nearly incurring destruction in a manner which recalls the adventures of Æneas and the surviving Trojans, succeeded in gaining the shores of India, where the rights of shelter and settlement were conceded by a Hindu ruler. Many centuries passed away without an event occurring to find mention in history or to vary the monotony of an agricultural existence. But at last, in the twelfth century, the Mahomedans, different in race but the same in spirit as those who had expelled them from Persia, penetrated into the province of Gujarat, where they had found a place of refuge. In face of this formidable and unexpected danger the Hindu chief collected all his subjects capable of bearing arms, and the Parsis gladly co-operated in the defence of their new home. This event is remarkable as the first occasion after their exile on

which the Parsis were called upon to take up arms, and the struggle was creditable to their spirit and courage. The Mahomedans were repulsed, and the result of the encounter was admitted to be due to the valour of the Parsis. But the Mahomedans returned in increased numbers and with renewed zeal to retrieve their misfortune, and they succeeded only too well. The Parsis had to abandon their old settlement in consequence of this fresh and successful invasion; and they seem to have established their chief abode at Surat. But for several centuries the darkness of ignorance descends upon their movements, and no specific mention is made of the Parsis until the reign of Akbar, the enlightened contemporary of Queen Elizabeth, when a member of the race visited Delhi and pleaded the cause of his kinsmen with such tact and fervour that he returned to Western India with some privileges, and the confidence that that Mogul Emperor at least would bestow justice and protection.

Shortly after this memorable visit to the Court of perhaps the wisest prince who ever directed the destinies of an Eastern people, which will be found recorded in its due place in the following pages, the most interesting epoch in Parsi history begins, for at an early period of the seventeenth century they had established a connection and intimate business relations with the different foreign factories which carried

on trade in Gujarat and along the western coast of India generally. Of these the principal at first was Surat, and there the Parsis were employed as middlemen or commission agents, not more by the Portuguese and Dutch than by the English. In fact it was owing to the representations of the last named that the Parsis first settled in Bombay, and that at a date preceding the transfer of that place from the hands of the Portuguese to the English in the year 1668.

Parsi prosperity may be said to date from the first connection with the English, and still more precisely from the time of settlement in Bombay. But it is a characteristic fact in the history of my people that they have invariably lived on good terms with the other races with whom they happen to have been brought into contact, no matter how different their creeds and their customs, and that they have always adapted themselves to circumstances, however unpleasant they might be. I have traced their career, in as close detail as the meagreness of the authorities extant will allow, from the time of their expatriation to the present hour, when they occupy so prominent and honourable a position in the Indian community, which enjoys tranquil security under the strong arm of English power. While it will be seen that they have throughout possessed the happy knack of getting on well with everybody, they have retained almost

intact their religion and traditions—in short, their individuality. More than a thousand years have elapsed since they were a self-governing people, and in that period they have existed under Governments of different creeds and characters, Hindu, Mahomedan, and Christian. They have been compared for this reason to the Jews, but, unlike that people, they have never known persecution. Until a recent period the Jews laboured in Europe under many disadvantages, and were regarded as an inferior race; and even in the East their position was often far from being enviable. But the Parsis may be said to have never known persecution in India, and they have lived side by side with their Hindu neighbours during all these centuries without any occurrence that has been remembered as sufficient to rankle in the mind. The Variav tragedy, described in the first chapter of this volume, and the anniversary of which is still commemorated at Surat, is the exception which proves the rule.

If some proof be asked of the homogeneity of the Parsis, I do not know that stronger could be furnished than is given by the sustained interest they have taken in those of their own kith and kin, who, remaining in Persia under the sway of the Mahomedan conquerors, have preserved their faith notwithstanding the persecution and ill-treatment to which they have in consequence been subjected. That interest

has manifested itself not merely in a curiosity to discover what form Zoroastrianism preserved in the country of its origin and greatest fame, or in a desire to acquire copies of those early religious books of authority which seem to have been lost during the exile of the so-called Guebres or fire-worshippers in Khorassan, and on the way to India; it showed itself in practical acts, not for the gratification of the Parsis in India, but for the distinct benefit and amelioration of the Parsis of Persia. I have fully explained all the circumstances connected with the abolition of the hateful "jazia" tax, as well as the sustained efforts and protracted campaign which at last resulted in the removal of many unjust and tyrannical laws that placed the lives, honour, and property of our kinsmen at the mercy of fanatical exponents of the Koran. The Parsis of Persia have been reduced to the lowest straits of misery; but through the energetic efforts of their kinsmen in Bombay they are now, if not launched on the high road of prosperity, at least placed under such conditions as should enable them to have full play for those faculties and qualities with which we do not doubt that they are gifted. I do not think I go too far in declaring that the facts recorded in the second chapter of the first volume amply warrant the statement that the Parsis are inspired by a strong national feeling.

When Bombay became a British possession, and gradually wrested from Goa the commercial supremacy of the west coast, the Parsis at last found the opportunity of distinguishing themselves above their fellows, and of gaining a name. European travellers had called attention to their good qualities at an early period of Western exploration in the East, but it was only at the commencement of the eighteenth century that they can be said to have found scope for employing them. While much of their business was still done in the character of agents for the English and other Europeans, they were gradually extending their operations in directions which they had not previously thought of or attempted. Before the middle of the century was reached they had established a wide and extending connection as contractors to the Government for the supply of provisions to troops in garrison and in the field. They were also largely employed by shipowners and merchants. These transactions brought wealth in their train, and it was not long before Parsis began to trade on their own account, and to establish independent firms. When their attention was turned to China they found the most profitable avenue that had been opened to them. Within a short period after the great victory of Trafalgar the Eastern seas were cleared of a hostile flag, and perfect security existed for all merchantmen sailing under English colours. From 1810 to 1842

the Parsis enjoyed no inconsiderable share of the profitable trade with China, which was steadily increasing during the whole of that generation. The greatest fortunes among the Parsis were made in this manner, and the well-known Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai amassed by this means the wealth which he was subsequently able to dispense with such generous beneficence.

But, strangely enough, after the treaty of Nankin in 1842, and also, it must be added, after the introduction of steam navigation, the share of the Parsis in the China trade gradually dwindled, and their place was taken by the large Jew firms of Bombay and Calcutta. I will not attempt to explain the causes of this to us regrettable loss of a foremost share in the most remunerative branch of the external trade of India; but the reader will find in the first two chapters of the second volume a sufficiently complete description of the principal of these merchants, and of the families of which they were the founders.

But the Parsis did not restrict their attention to the China trade. They turned their energies into whatever channel seemed to afford a profitable return, and thus they were to be found in almost every industry and profession keenly emulating the enterprise of Europeans. In no other department was this more conspicuous than in shipbuilding, where it seemed as if the conditions were more arduous, and

the chances against success the more numerous. But still the result went to falsify these not unnatural anticipations, and the members of the Wadia family showed a skill as shipwrights that won the admiration of English admirals and naval constructors. They seemed to inherit the capacity just as they succeeded by family right to the post of master-builder to the East India Company. It does not seem an unnatural inference to declare that this success, attained in so many different directions, must have been attributable to the good qualities and perseverance of the Parsis. The Hindus and Mahomedans, who so far outnumber the descendants of the ancient Persians that the latter are only like a drop in the ocean, have had the same opportunities, and if they had only seized them there is no reason why they should not have attained the commercial pre-eminence that the Parsis long possessed, and still to a certain extent enjoy. Without incurring the charge of excessive partiality to my own race, the fact shows their superior energy and persistency in attaining an object upon which they may have set their hearts.

But the Parsis have earned their reputation not so much by the manner in which they have accumulated fortunes as by the way in which they have dispensed the store with which Providence has blessed them. Whether the explanation be an exceptional capacity

for realising the weight of misfortune, or a large-hearted disregard of selfish considerations, it is certain that the annals of charity contain no more striking examples of generosity than those furnished by Parsi benefactors. It is open to any one to say that the virtue has been carried to a fault, and that many Parsis who stand high as public benefactors, and whose names are commemorated in noble institutions, have reduced themselves and their families to straitened circumstances. Whatever may be thought of this as a matter of prudence, there can be no hesitation in saying that it is an unusual and remarkable evidence of benevolence. The Parsis have been charitable on what, in the eyes of European millionaires, would be only small means. They have not made their donations out of a large and assured income. They have freely given of their capital to any cause that enlisted their sympathies, or that seemed calculated either to benefit suffering humanity, or to reveal their loyalty to the English Government.

Another point about Parsi benevolence, and one which distinguishes it from every other of Oriental origin, is that it has not been restricted to its own community. All its own charitable and educational requirements have been provided for, and then the greatest zeal and readiness have been displayed in relieving distress wherever it presented itself. The other peoples of India have their benevolent tend-

encies, but they mainly direct their efforts to promoting their own welfare, and seem to consider misfortunes outside their circle as being no affair of theirs, and as having no claim on their purses. Parsi benevolence has been exhibited in a truly catholic spirit, and scarcely any subscription list on a large scale or for an important object during the last fifty years has been without its one or more Parsi names upon it. The Parsis have therefore gained a prominent position in the world's estimation by their commercial honesty and capacity, as well as by their widespread benevolence. As the total number of Parsis does not amount to 100,000 persons, it is evident that this reputation must have been obtained with difficulty, and, what is still more important, that it must have been thoroughly deserved.

No matters are of greater importance in connection with a community than its religious form and feeling, and the condition of education among the mass of the people. Into both of these subjects I have entered in considerable detail, treating the latter subject in the first volume, and the former in three separate chapters of the second. The question of education scarcely goes back farther than fifty years among the Parsis. Before that they were content with the merest rudiments of knowledge which were conveyed in Gujarati, the Hindu vernacular that they had adopted at the time of their first settlement in India.

A commercial life is unfavourable to any great research, and the Parsis not merely abandoned but completely forgot their original language. The instances were very rare of any scholar pursuing any deep inquiries into the earlier languages of the native land, such as the Zend, Pehlevi, and Pazand tongues. A knowledge of Persian itself sufficed to secure the fame of a scholar who in the earlier days was almost exclusively confined to the priestly class. The curiosity to ascertain some definite knowledge of the early creed and religious works of the Zoroastrians never allowed the lamp of knowledge, or perhaps it would be more correct to say of scholarship, to quite go out. But for the purposes of the trade to which Parsis long devoted their exclusive attention a scanty education sufficed. It was only when other openings of employment presented themselves, and when perhaps the example of Englishmen and closer contact with them revealed the advantages of education, and indeed its absolute necessity if the Parsis were to keep pace with the times, that they set themselves with zeal to learn whatever came within their reach.

The credit of having set them the necessary example and of having shown them the advantages to be derived from the acquisition of knowledge belongs to Mountstuart Elphinstone, one of the most enlightened of Anglo-Indian statesmen. The flourishing institution which bears his name was the fore-

runner of many other agencies subsequently created for the spread of education by the efforts of the Parsis themselves. Their value is clearly shown in the result, for among no Eastern population has education made more rapid strides, or is it more generally spread, than among our community. The natural consequence has followed in the Parsis turning their attention to matters outside trade. They have adopted the professions with zeal, and their worldly success has grown with the increase of their opportunities, notwithstanding the great adversity through which they passed at the time of "the share mania." I have supplied the facts in the chapter on Education that bear out this statement, and the Parsis are naturally proud of the position which many of their members have gained in the Government services, at the Bar, and in the medical and other professions. The Parsis have attracted notice not merely by their general aptitude, but still more particularly for their exceptional fluency in speaking English. In all these matters the rising generation of Parsis promises to show as marked a progress over the last generation as that itself did over the Parsis of the olden time.

On one point I feel sure that the sympathies of the English reader will be with the efforts of my people, and that is on the subject of female education. In Asiatic countries that question presents peculiar

difficulties. Not merely is there doubt as to the necessity of educating women at all, but early marriage and the jealously-guarded right of female seclusion have placed bars in the way of instruction which can only be gradually removed. It is something to be able to say that the Parsis—thanks, of course, to the absence of caste distinctions and prejudices—have been able to break through these fetters to a greater extent than any other Indian race; and while female education is becoming an accomplished fact instead of a mere phrase, it was only natural that a great reform should have been simultaneously carried out for the abolition of marriages between children. At the present time Parsi ladies are beginning to make that educational progress in which our men have reached an advanced stage. One of the most practical benefits that will thus be conferred on our community, in addition to the introduction into the domestic circle of a higher influence through female knowledge, will be the gradual creation of a band of lady doctors, who will be able to minister to sufferers of the same sex not merely among their own race but also among the Hindus and Mahomedans, who have a reluctance to admit a man even on an errand of mercy and succour into their female quarters.

But perhaps of all the subjects into which the condition of a community may be divided, that which will probably attract most attention in con-

nection with the Parsis is their religion. On that important matter I have allowed myself to dwell at considerable length, as I believe that both scholars and the reading public generally will take interest in learning what the Parsi religion consists of, as well as in becoming acquainted with the tenets first enunciated by Zoroaster, and which have been faithfully held by the Parsis ever since. Notwithstanding the long intercourse with the Hindus which has necessarily led to the introduction of some practices not free from the suspicion of superstition and at variance with the teaching of Zoroaster, the Parsi creed remains to the present day a pure and distinct religion. This is the more remarkable as many of the books on which it was based have disappeared, while others were lost sight of during many centuries. The religious doctrines flourish almost intact, and they constitute a system of monotheism which refutes the too-common allegation that the Parsis are worshippers of fire rather than of God. On this point the opinion of the great historian Gibbon may be quoted :—

"The theology of Zoroaster was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his disciples; but the most careless observers were struck with the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship. 'That people,' says Herodotus, 'rejects the use of temples, of altars, and of statues, and smiles at the folly of those nations who imagine that the gods are sprung from, or bear any affinity with, the human nature.

The tops of the highest mountains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns and prayers are the principal worship; the supreme God who fills the wide circle of Heaven is the object to whom they are addressed.' Yet at the same time, in the true spirit of a polytheist, he accuses them of adoring earth, water, fire, the winds, and the sun and moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly fire, light, and the sun, whom they call Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the noblest productions, and the most powerful agents of the divine power and nature."

I have made it my principal object in the chapters on Religion to show beyond the shadow of a doubt that we are not fire-worshippers, but God-worshippers. Fire is a symbol of divinity in our eyes, and nothing more. In this we resemble the great number of Christians who belong to the Church of Rome. The charge has been repeated as much from habit as from any pretence to definite knowledge, and, as the historian of the Roman Empire has stated, it was one which the ancient Persians had to combat as well as the modern Parsis. It will be the greatest possible satisfaction to me if the facts collected in the following pages should put the last nail in the coffin of this popular fallacy.

On the subject of our great prophet Zoroaster, who ranks by universal consent with Moses and Mahomed, Confucius and Sakya Muni, I have sought to give all the knowledge that we possess of this author of

our religion. Without discussing too minutely the different versions given of his birth and the age at which he flourished, I have shown exactly what the more intelligent and better informed among my people accept on the subject; and it will be admitted that their knowledge is as clear and precise as is desirable. If some of my statements should disaccord with those made from time to time by the great scholars and exponents of Sanscrit and of the primitive Aryan religions, it is only necessary to say that my province has been limited to playing the part of a faithful exponent of the views current among my own people. In the preparation of the chapters on Religion, I must express my obligations to Ervad Jivanji Jamshèdji Modi, B.A., for his valuable assistance. Some of the materials used in these volumes have been taken from the Parsi Prakash, which is a record in Gujarati of events interesting to the Parsi community.

In addition to the strictly religious portion of Zoroastrianism I have dealt with the questions of marriage, betrothal, funerals, and other important ceremonies of human life in different chapters under the head of Manners and Customs. Here the influence of the Hindus is most apparent, and innovations have proved more numerous; but still the main character of these ceremonies is distinct from that of the similar practices among the Hindus. It is hoped

that the meaning of these ceremonies will be rendered more clear to the reader by the illustrations given in this volume.

The reproduction of the illustrations in an adequate manner has presented many and unexpected difficulties. This fact supplies the explanation of the variety of processes that have had to be adopted. Had it been found possible to reproduce in chromolithography the faces in the two groups of "The Ceremony of Investiture with the Sudra and Kusti" and "A Marriage Ceremony" with the precision and clearness that was desirable, greater uniformity would have been attained. The indulgence of the critic and reader is asked for the variety presented in the character of the illustrations, on the ground that in no other manner could the same results have been obtained.

I have only, in conclusion, to leave my volumes to the favourable consideration of their readers. More than a quarter of a century ago I visited England at a time when, on account of the great Mutiny, the name and the persons of Indian races did not find much favour in the minds of the English people. It had been my privilege during the height of that revolt to publish a pamphlet which had an extensive circulation among the Parsis and Hindus, dwelling on the superior benefits conferred by English rule, and insisting that self-interest, if no higher

motive, bound all lovers of their country in allegiance to the English Raj. It was only natural that I should also wish to place my own people in a true light before the Government and people of England. I therefore wrote their history twenty-six years ago in a small volume which was favourably reviewed, and which has been out of print for twenty years. Soon after my return from Europe I described my *Travels in Great Britain*, written in our own vernacular Gujarati. The work had a phenomenal success—gratifying to me on personal grounds, and also as showing the intelligence of my community. I have now completed in this enlarged, and I hope improved, *History* the labours that have occupied my leisure. If I have succeeded in making Englishmen and Parsis better acquainted with each other I shall have realised to the fullest extent my purpose. The English Government in India has no more faithful subjects than the Parsis; and it is a proud privilege to feel that one has had something to do with the extension of a mutual knowledge. The Parsis will no doubt be glad to see a history of themselves written by a member of their own race, but they will be still more rejoiced if they can think that it will spread among the English a more general and a more correct knowledge of their position in the Indian community.

It would be unjust if I omitted to state that,

owing to my residence in Bombay, the arduous and responsible duty of passing this work through the press has been performed by my son, Mr. Jehangir Dosabhai Framji, of the Bombay Uncovenanted Civil Service; and that, under his personal supervision and immediate direction, the delicate work of reproducing the illustrations has been accomplished.

DOSABHAI FRAMJI KARAKA.

Malabar Hill,
Bombay, 20*th September* 1884.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Parsi community—Their proud traditions—The early history of Persia—The heroic dynasties—Zoroaster—Cyrus the Great—Cambyses—Darius—Xerxes—The Sassanian dynasty—The wars of Persia and the Roman Empire—The Emperors Valerian and Julian—The glorious reign of Naoshirvan—Origin of name of Parsi—The rise of Mahomedan aggression—The first invasion of Persia—The battle of Marwaha—Repulse of the Arabs—Persian success neutralised by dissension—Yazdezard—Receives an Arab deputation at Ctesiphon—The commands of the prophet—An unfortunate gift—"The soil of Persia is ours!"—The battle of Kadesia—The decisive battle of Nahavand—Sir John Malcolm's account of it—The fate of Yazdezard—Changes effected by Mahomedan conquest—Only a few Persians hold out—Their places of refuge—Khorassan—The island of Ormus—The Parsis sail for India—Early intercourse with India—The Parsis arrive first at Diu—Leave Diu for Gujarat—Nearly meet with shipwreck—Reach Sanjan—Their own account of their religion—Their acquaintance with Hindu customs—The sixteen "schloks"—They adopt the Gujarati language—Parsi settlements in other parts of India—Referred to by early travellers—Attempt at wholesale conversion—How the Parsis baffled the Portuguese—They abandon Thana—A warlike incident—The Mahomedan invasion of Gujarat—The tragedy of Variav—The Parsis settle in Bombay—Induced to do so by English.

THE Parsis are probably the smallest community in the whole world, for they number scarcely a hundred thousand. They are chiefly to be found in India, where Bombay, the metropolis of the Western Presidency, has been for nearly a century their headquarters. In the midst of the many distinct races that form the Indian population they are like but a

drop in the ocean. A full moiety of their total number reside in Bombay; the rest are scattered throughout the different cities of India. Insignificant as they may thus seem to be in point of numbers, they occupy, none the less, one of the foremost places among Indian nationalities. Their peculiar position and foreign designation are apt to strike strangers on their first visit to India, and interest and curiosity alike prompt the not uncommon inquiry, Who are these people, the Parsis?

The answer to this inquiry involves the relation of by no means an unromantic tale. The Parsis pride themselves on being the progeny of a mighty race of people who occupied Persia centuries before the Christian era. They declare, and can produce some evidence in support of the statement, that their grandeur, magnificence, and glory were unsurpassed by any other nation of ancient times; that their kings were at once the most powerful of monarchs and the wisest and most beneficent of rulers; that their armies were renowned for courage and military prowess; and, in short, that they were the foremost Asiatic nation of their time. These people, the ancestors of the Parsis, were well trained in all the arts of civilised life, and were remarkable for their valour and energy, bringing up their youth "to ride, to draw the bow, and to speak the truth." They could boast of heroes as famous for their courage and

activity, their generosity and humanity, as for their chivalry and spirit of enterprise; of women as brave as they were fair, and celebrated for the freedom allowed them and for their modesty. Nor had they less reason to be proud of the territorial extent of an empire which was at least eight times the size of the Babylonian at its zenith and more than four times as large as the Assyrian, or equal to half of modern Europe—an empire which touched the waters of the Mediterranean, the Ægean, the Black, the Caspian, the Indian, the Persian, and the Red Seas, and through which there flowed six of the grandest rivers in the world—the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Indus, the Jaxartes, the Oxus, and the Nile, each more than a thousand miles in length—and the surface of which reached from thirteen hundred feet below the sea-level to twenty thousand feet above, thus yielding an immense variety of temperatures and productions.

The history of the Persian people from the earliest times has been full of interest. Leaving out of consideration the kings of the race of Mahabad, we come to those of the dynasty of Gaiomard. Their chief occupation appears to have been to fight demons and giants; but Gaiomard's grandson, Hoshang, taught his subjects agriculture, irrigation, and the making of iron tools for peace and war, and was called "Peshdad" (the legislator). The dynasty to which he belonged came consequently to be known as the

Peshdadian. His son and successor, Tehemuras, built several cities, and, having civilised barbarous tribes, received the surname of "Devband" (conqueror of the "Devs"). King Jamshid of this dynasty has been mentioned by all historians in high terms of praise. He was a wise and enlightened prince, much in advance of his time, and is considered to have been a great benefactor of the human race. He was the first to regulate the calendar, and order a festival to be held on the day the sun entered the vernal equinox. This festival is called the Jamshedi Naoroz, and is still celebrated with great pomp in Persia, as well as by the Parsis in India. Until recent discoveries disclosed the fact that the famous Persepolis was founded by Darius Hystaspes, Jamshid was popularly supposed to have been the founder of that famous city. His nephew and successor, Feridun, was cast in the heroic mould. He rescued the country, with the assistance of the famous Kawa, who may be called the William Tell of Persia, from the foreign yoke of Zohak, who had usurped the throne.

The Kayanian dynasty, which was the next to rule, is one famous in Persian history for the great national heroes who fought their country's battles. The most stirring portion of Firdusi's great epic, the *Shah-Nama*, narrates the daring feats and wonderful achievements of those mighty men who overthrew the Turanians, the bitter enemies of their race,

in a series of desperate battles. Zal and his great son Rustam, with a whole family of heroes born of their loins, form the group round which the Persians of every age have loved to associate their most cherished romance and their most intensely national aspirations. The traditional renown of their individual prowess and their military skill is claimed by the modern Parsi as animating his spirit and firing his blood even although now immersed in the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce. The reign of Gushtasp (B.C. 1300) of the Kayanian dynasty evokes the most reverent feelings in the minds of the Parsis, as being the reign that saw the rise of their great Prophet Zoroaster, and the first promulgation of their religion. It is not to our purpose to trace the history of the several dynasties[1] of kings who swayed the Persian realm. We have only to give here a general idea of the race from which the Parsis have descended, and we therefore proceed at once to the most magnificent time in their history.

The founder of the Persian empire known to the Greeks was Cyrus the Great (B.C. 558). He was a powerful and magnificent king, whose mighty armies

[1] The following are the names of the dynasties that reigned in Persia from the earliest times up to the conquest of the empire by the Arabs, viz.—1, the Mahabadian; 2, the Peshdadian; 3, the Kayanian; 4, the first Median; 5, the Assyrian; 6, the second Median; 7, the Achæmenian; 8, the Parthian or Ascanian; and 9, the Sassanian.

conquered many kingdoms, and who was the foremost figure of his times, dreaded and admired throughout the whole of the then known world. He overthrew and destroyed the Median power, which before he ascended the throne possessed the rights of suzerainty over his country, and established a Persian empire in its stead. He also became the possessor of the accumulated stores of ages, the riches of the Ninevite kings. His intrepid spirit was not satisfied with these early triumphs. After subjugating Media he engaged in a war with Chrœsus, the richest monarch of his age, and thus brought the kingdom of Lydia under the Persian sway. He compelled Asiatic Greece to acknowledge his power. He conquered the once great and glorious kingdom of Bactria, and followed up his successes with an attack upon the Sacæ tribe, then occupying the districts now known as Kashgar and Yarkand. The Sacæ were considered excellent soldiers, and their women proved themselves as brave as their men in fighting against the army of the invader. Cyrus also conquered the mighty and glorious empire of Babylon, and added about 250,000 square miles of territory to his empire. On making himself master of Palestine he freed the Jews from captivity and allowed them to establish themselves at Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. In his comprehensive scheme of conquests were included Egypt and Phœnicia, but death

intervened, and it was left to his successor to bring those two states under Persian authority.

The character of Cyrus has secured the most favourable recognition on all hands. He was as brave as he was active and energetic, and possessed all the qualities which contribute to make a general successful and a king great. He was at the same time endowed with a humane and generous disposition, and was magnanimous even towards his enemies. He was free from the scornful pride of the Oriental despot, and his memory has been always held in high veneration by the Persians.

The other kings of this dynasty, although less celebrated than the conqueror Cyrus, have left some mark in history. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, conquered Egypt (B.C. 525). But, next to Cyrus, Darius Hystaspes (B.C. 521) was the greatest of the Persian kings. His long reign formed an important epoch in Persian annals. He not only devoted a good deal of his attention to the consolidation and organisation of the empire founded by Cyrus, but by fresh conquests he increased its renown. He extended the empire beyond the point to which Cyrus had carried it in the east, by bringing under the Persian sway the Panjab and the whole valley of the Indus, a conquest which introduced immense wealth into Persia, and resulted in the springing up of a regular trade by means of coasting vessels between the

mouths of the Indus and the Persian Gulf. Even Byzantium and Macedonia bowed submission to the Lord of Western Asia. The ambition of Darius Hystaspes was then directed to Europe, and Greece offered herself as the first mark and obstacle of his ambition. Though the famous battle of Marathon is alleged to have resulted in a victory for the Greeks, the Persian soldiers, under Mardonias, the general of Darius, are said to have fought with a bravery which elicited the praises of their enemies. Undismayed by this battle, Darius was preparing for a second invasion, and only death prevented his leading a fresh expedition in person. His energy, vigour, foresight, judicious management of his military expeditions, and his administrative ability in the consolidation and extension of the empire conquered by Cyrus, have been highly praised. The well-known historian of the five ancient monarchies has said that he was an organiser, general, statesman, administrator, builder, patron of art and literature, all in one. Xerxes (B.C. 486) was another of the great kings of Persia. He caused the fate of Greece to tremble in the balance. Of his successes on land in his expedition against that country there is no question, though his naval force met with rude reverses.

When we come to the Sassanian dynasty (A.D. 226), most of the sovereigns of which were engaged in wars with the Roman emperors, we meet with the great

names of Ardeshir Babekan, Shapur, and Naoshirvan. The first of these was the restorer of the mighty empire which, created by Cyrus, had been lost by Darius Codomanus after his defeat by Alexander the Great. Ardeshir was famed for his wisdom and goodness as well as for his bravery. He governed his kingdom on the principles of strict justice, and it was in his reign that the ancient religion of Zoroaster, which had been greatly corrupted, was restored to its pristine purity.

Shapur is famous in history for his successes over the Roman armies under the Emperor Valerian, whom he took prisoner (A.D. 260). History has informed us how the Emperor Julian was defeated in his attempt to invade Persia itself with the view of avenging the humiliation the Romans had suffered under Valerian, and how he was compelled to sign an ignominious treaty, by which he restored to Shapur the five provinces on the other side of the Tigris and the strongest forts in Mesopotamia, and abandoned Armenia to the King of Persia, by whom it was subsequently subjugated.

Naoshirvan, the last of the Persian monarchs of note, had a glorious reign of forty-eight years, beginning from A.D. 531. In the thirteenth year of Justinian Naoshirvan undertook his first expedition against the Romans, in which he captured and destroyed Antioch. He waged war against them on several

occasions, with more or less success, until his death. He also extended his conquests in other directions. Some of the countries beyond the Oxus, all those to as far as the Indus, with some of the provinces of India, as well as a few of the finest districts of Arabia, acknowledged the power of Naoshirvan.

But Naoshirvan's memory is enshrined in the hearts of Persians by his indefatigable efforts to promote the prosperity of his dominions, and the happiness of the people confided by Providence to his care. He restored old cities and built new ones, and gave them a population. He constructed bridges, roads, and canals, introducing all the elements of material prosperity into his wide-stretching dominions. Above all, he was remarkable for his keen sense of justice, which he unflinchingly observed in his own public and private conduct, while he enforced it in that of his ministers and officers of all grades. He was therefore surnamed "Adal," or the Just. His fame spread to the most distant countries. The Emperors of China and India coveted his friendship, and sent him magnificent presents.

Naoshirvan was the last of those monarchs whose virtues and talents shed a lustre on the pages of Persian history. After him the kingdom was governed by sovereigns who, within the short space of three-quarters of a century, brought a flourishing empire to such a condition as to make it fall an easy

prey to hordes of barbarians from Arabia, whom they had been wont to despise. Peace and luxury seem to have done their enervating work on a once hardy and warlike people, and the mighty fabric which the arms of earlier rulers had raised fell prostrate at one stroke before the feet of the rude and fanatical Arab invader on the field of Nahavand.

This is but a slight and passing sketch of the early greatness of the people from whom the Parsis claim an uninterrupted descent, and whose traditions they still cherish with unabated fondness as those of ancestors whose blue blood still runs in their veins in all its original purity. Their designation of Parsi is derived from their native country, Pars or Fars. That province contained Persepolis, the chief city of the empire, and the most splendid of the royal palaces. From it in course of time the whole kingdom gained a name.

To give a short history of the arrival of the Parsis in India, and a description of their manners, customs, religion, and present position, is the object of this work, and we now begin our task by briefly describing how the kingdom of Persia passed into Arab hands.

It was in the time of Ardeshir the Third that the fanatical and ambitious spirit evoked by Mahomed expanded into the bold design of invading and conquering the land of the Persian. The first invasion began by order of Khalif Omar, A.D. 633, when

Khalud Ben Walid marched at the head of ten thousand men, and Mosanna at the head of another eight thousand, against Hormaz, the Persian governor of the lower portion of Erak, and defeated him. After this victory Khalud marched further into the country and conquered Erak after fighting several battles; but he soon lost it again in the battle called "the Day of the Bridge," or of Marwaha and of Kirkis, near which place it was fought (A.D. 634). Four thousand Mussulmans lost their lives in the struggle and two thousand returned to Medina. If Behman Jaduyeh, the Persian commander on this occasion, had followed up his victory it would have been impossible for the Arab army to have escaped complete destruction. But two Persian factions—one under Rustam, the generalissimo of the Persian empire, and the other under Prince Firuzan—being at feud, and a civil war seeming imminent, Behman, instead of fighting his country's battles, hastened to support Rustam in Madayn, the capital of the kingdom, against Firuzan.

Encouraged by their first success and fired with religious zeal, the Arabs were not to be dismayed by a single defeat. They established their camp on the brink of the desert between Kalesiah and Kaffan, where they were gradually reinforced by nomadic hordes of Arabs who joined them by order of the Khalif. The rivals, Rustam and Firuzan, who had at last merged their differences and become colleagues,

on being informed of this concentration of the enemy, despatched a force of ten thousand men under General Mihran to disperse them.

The two armies met, and a combat took place in which the Persians were overthrown. Mihran was slain, one-half of his army was annihilated, and the other put to flight. The Arabs pursued the fugitives, and, making plundering excursions, devastated the country along their route, and returned to their camp laden with an immense quantity of booty.

Rustam and Firuzan had made no efforts to stop these marauding expeditions, which soon extended to as far as Bagdad; and this inaction naturally displeased the people as well as the magnates of Persia, who attributed all the misfortunes of the state to the rivalry of these two men. So loud did the popular outcry become that the people rose and threatened to put them to death. Seeing that they had no other chance of retaining authority, Rustam and Firuzan determined to remove Purandukht, one of the daughters of Khosru Parvez, who occupied the throne, and to give Persia a king in the hope that he might enjoy greater support among the people. A young scion of the royal house having been found in a youth named Yazdezard, at that time about twenty years old, he was acknowledged sovereign by acclamation.

Yazdezard, having intelligent advisers, and profiting by the enthusiasm of the people, immediately

took measures to drive out the Mussulmans from Arabian Erak. Large numbers of troops were raised, and generals appointed with orders to march simultaneously to Ambar, Hirah, and Abotta. Mosanna, the Arab commander, aware of his inability to resist the impending storm, retired towards the desert, allowing the Persians to occupy without any resistance all the points of Erak where the Mussulmans had become masters. The Khalif Omar, however, raised new levies, and, appointing Sad Ben Abu Vokas commander-in-chief, sent them against the Persians. As soon as Yazdezard had become aware of the first movements of Sad, he ordered a considerable army to be levied under the command of Rustam, who enjoyed at that time the highest military reputation among the Persians. Whilst Yazdezard, much agitated by the depredations of the Arabs and the cries of distress of his people, was endeavouring to spur on Rustam, his generalissimo, to take more energetic measures, a deputation of fourteen Mussulmans arrived at Madayn, otherwise called Ctesiphon, which was at that time his capital and residence. After these Arabs had been brought into his presence, Yazdezard first asked them some unimportant questions through an interpreter. He desired to know how they called their cloaks, whips, and sandals. They replied, *Burd*, *Saut*, and *Na'l*. The analogy between the sound of these Arabic words and the Persian ones designating the

ideas of taking (*burdan*), burning (*sukhtan*), and lamenting (*nalidan*), appeared so ominous of ill to the monarch and his officers that they all changed colour.

"What motive brings you here?" then asked the king, "and why has your nation taken up arms against us?" Noman Makarin, who was the spokesman of the deputation, replied: "Allah commanded us, by the mouth of His Prophet, to extend the dominion of Islam over all nations. That order we obey, and say to you, Become our brothers by adopting the Faith, or consent to pay tribute if you wish to avoid war."

"The dissensions which have for some years troubled Persia must have greatly emboldened you," said Yazdezard; "but we are now in a position to make you feel our power as you formerly experienced it, when the ordinary garrisons of our frontiers sufficed to stop your progress and to inflict chastisement. Mice and serpents are your food, and you have nothing to dress with except the wool of camels and sheep. Who are you that you think yourselves able to fasten on to our empire? Of all the nations of the world you are the poorest, the most disunited, the most ignorant, the most estranged from the arts which constitute the sources of wealth and power. If a foolish presumption has taken hold of you, open your eyes and cease to indulge deceitful illusions. If misery and want have driven you out from your deserts, we will grant

you food and raiment; we will deal liberally with your chiefs, and we will give you a king who will govern you with gentleness and wisdom."

The deputation kept silence for a while, but one of its members soon broke it. "My companions," said he, "are men of distinction among Arabs. If, in consequence of a demeanour which their sense of delicacy impels them to use towards an august personage, they hesitate to reply, and frankly to express their thoughts, I shall do it for them and speak with the liberty of a Bedawi. What thou hast said about our poverty, our divisions, and our state of barbarism was quite true. Yes, we were so wretched that persons could be seen among us appeasing their hunger by feeding on insects and serpents, whilst some killed their daughters to avoid sharing their food with them. Plunged in the darkness of superstition and idolatry, without laws or restraint, always foes to each other, we were occupied only in robbing and killing where we could. This is what we have been. At present we are a new people. Allah has raised in our midst a man, the most distinguished of Arabs by the nobility of his birth, by his virtues, by his genius; and Allah has selected him to be His Apostle and His Prophet. Through the organ of this man Allah has said to us: 'I am the only God, the eternal, the creator of the universe. My goodness sends you a guide to direct you. The way which He shows you will deliver you

from the pain I reserve in the life to come for the impious and the criminal, and will lead you near me, to the sojourn of felicity.' Persuasion gradually insinuated itself into our hearts; we have believed in the mission of the Prophet; we have recognised that his words are the words of Allah, and his commands the commands of Allah, and that the religion he announced to us, which he called Islam, is the only true religion. He has enlightened our minds, he has extinguished our hatreds, he has united and converted us into a society of brothers under laws dictated by divine wisdom. Then he said to us: 'Complete my work; spread everywhere the dominion of Islam. The earth belongs to Allah; He gives it to you. The nations which shall embrace your faith will be assimilated to yourselves, they shall enjoy the same advantages and will be subject to the same laws. On those who will be desirous to retain their beliefs you are to impose the obligation of declaring themselves subject to you, and of paying tribute, in consideration whereof you are to cover them with your protection; but those who shall refuse to accept Islam, or the conditions of tributaries, you are to fight them until you have exterminated them. Some of you will perish in the struggle. Those who fall therein will obtain Paradise, and those who survive, victory.' These are the destinies of power and glory towards which we confidently march. At present thou know-

est us; it is for thee to choose either Islam or tribute, or else war unto death."

"If I entertained no regard for your character of deputies," replied Yazdezard, "I would instantly deprive you of life." Uttering these words, he ordered a bag full of earth to be brought, and ironically alluding to the tribute the envoys had ventured to demand, he said to them, "This is all you will get from me. Return to your general; inform him that Rustam will, in a few days, go to bury him with his whole army in the trench of Kadesia." Then he added, "Let this bag be placed on the shoulders of the chief of the deputation, and let the men be pushed out from the gates of Madayn." Asim Amin hastened forward to receive this load, and, far from feeling humbled by taking it, he lifted it on his head with an air of satisfaction, which appeared to Yazdezard to be a mark of stupidity. The Arabs had scarcely departed when Rustam, having been informed of the details of the conference and of the manner in which it terminated, immediately understood the presage which had excited the joy of Asim. He sent persons to run after the deputies, in order to take from them the earth which they were carrying away as a pledge of future success. They had, however, progressed so far that all pursuit was vain, and when they reached their camp Asim, depositing the bag before his general, exclaimed, "The soil of Persia is ours!"

After this striking interview, our description of which is taken from the graphic pages of the great historical work of Tabari, hostilities were resumed, and at the battle of Kadesia (A.D. 636) the victory turned in favour of the Mussulmans after several days' severe fighting. Very soon afterwards, and without any further pitched battle, Madayn, the capital, was occupied by the Arabs. Yazdezard fled from Madayn, and retired to Holwan, where another great battle was fought on the plains of Jalula (November-December, A.D. 637). When the news of this fresh defeat of his army reached Yazdezard he hurriedly quitted Holwan, and proceeded in the direction of Rae. The towns of Masebedan and Shirwan surrendered after a battle which raged fiercely for three days (January, A.D. 638), and thenceforth Islam prevailed over all Erak from the heights of Holwan to as far as Mosul and Syria. By the end of October, A.D. 641, some of the towns of the province of Ahwaz were conquered by the Arabs, who also undertook an expedition to Bahrain, and forced the Persian general, Hormazan, to capitulate after having besieged him for six months in the town of Tuster, which they only succeeded in entering by means of an underground canal.

Yazdezard, when he had been at Rae a short time, became aware that the Mussulmans would soon invade that part of the country also; so he summoned to his aid the bravest of his generals, and collected an army

exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand men. With these forces he decided to make a final effort to check Arab ambition. Fortune having already smiled upon Omar, he too followed up his advantages by sending large reinforcements from every part of the Arab dominions to the army in Persia; and a sanguinary battle was fought on the plains of Nahavand, a village some fifty miles from the ancient city of Ecbatana. This battle decided the fate of the Persian empire. The Arabs, kindled with enthusiasm, careless of danger, and insensible to fatigue, fought bravely with the newly-inspired zeal of their religion, which recognised the hero alone as worthy of Paradise. On the other hand, the glory of the Persian monarchy had declined, and the empire was barely recovering from a series of internal troubles when thus beset by the gravest external danger. Ruler after ruler had been dethroned and murdered, and the army of the empire, though large in point of numbers, could not be said to approach in valour and discipline the hardy Arabs of the desert. On the authority of the Zeenut-ul-Tuarikh, Sir John Malcolm thus describes the battle of Nahavand (A.D. 641) and the fate which overtook the unfortunate Yazdezard:—

"The Arabian force assembled at Kufa and from thence marched to the plains of Nahavand, on which the Persian army had established a camp surrounded by a deep entrenchment. During two months these great armies continued in sight of each other, and many skirmishes were fought. The Persian general

appearing determined not to quit his position, the zealous valour of the leader of the faithful became impatient of delay. He drew up his army in order of battle, and thus addressed them: 'My friends! prepare yourselves to conquer, or drink of the sweet sherbet of martyrdom. I shall now call the Tukbeer three times; at the first you will gird your loins, at the second mount your steed, and at the third point your lances and rush to victory, or to Paradise. As to me,' said Noman with a raised and enraptured voice, 'I shall be a martyr. When I am slain obey the orders of Huzeefah-ebn Aly-Oman.' The moment he had done speaking the first sound of Tukbeer (Allah-Akbar, or God is great) was heard throughout the camp. At the second all were upon horses; and at the third, which was repeated by the whole army, the Mahomedans charged with a fury that was irresistible. Noman was, as he predicted, slain; but his army gained a great and memorable victory. Thirty thousand Persians were pierced by their lances, and eighty thousand more were drowned in the deep trench by which they had surrounded their camp. Their general Firuzan, with four thousand men, fled to the hills: but such was the effect of terror on one side and of confidence on the other that the chief was pursued, defeated, and slain, by a body of no more than one thousand men.

"The battle of Nahavand decided the fate of Persia, which from its date fell under the dominion of the Arabian khalifs. Yazdezard protracted for several years a wretched and precarious existence. He first fled to Seistan, then to Khorassan, and lastly to Merv. The governor of that city invited the Khakan of Tartars to take possession of the person of the fugitive monarch. That sovereign accepted the offer; his troops entered Merv, the gates of which were opened to them by the treacherous governor, and made themselves masters of it, in spite of the desperate resistance of the surprised but brave and enraged inhabitants. Yazdezard escaped on foot from the town during the confusion of the contest. He reached a mill eight miles from Merv, and entreated the miller to conceal him. The man told him he owed a certain sum to the owner of the mill, and that, if he paid the debt, he should have his protection against all pursuers. The monarch agreed to the proposal; and, after

giving his rich sword and belt as pledges of his sincerity, he retired to rest with a perfect confidence in his safety. But the miller could not resist the temptation of making his fortune by the possession of the rich arms and robes of the unfortunate prince, whose head he separated from his body with the sword he had received from him, and then cast his corpse into the watercourse that turned the mill. The Governor of Merv, and those who had aided him, began in a few days to suffer from the tyranny of the Khakan, and to repent the part which they had acted. They encouraged the citizens to rise upon the Tartars: and not only recovered the city, but forced the Khakan to fly with great loss to Bokhara. A diligent inquiry was made after Yazdezard, whose fate was soon discovered. The miller fell a victim to popular rage; and the corpse of the monarch was embalmed and sent to Istakhr, to be interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors. This prince, who appears to have been as weak as he was unfortunate, sat upon the throne only nine years—that being the period from his elevation to the battle of Nahavand. He was the last sovereign of the House of Sassan, a dynasty which ruled Persia four hundred and fifteen years, and the memory of which is still cherished by a nation whose ancient glory is associated with the fame of Ardeshir, Shapur, and Naoshirvan."

With the overthrow of the Persian monarchy every vestige of its magnificence disappeared, and the empire with its glories became the inheritance of the Mahomedans, whose supremacy throughout the newly-conquered kingdom was promptly established.

History has faithfully and uniformly drawn the character of Mahomedan conquerors, for wherever they have appeared their footsteps have been traced in characters of blood. Toleration in religion is unknown to the haughty and bigoted believers in the Koran. Intense fanaticism is the highest virtue

demanded of them, and one which is supposed to secure for them favour in the eyes of their Prophet and their God, and to take them by the shortest route to heaven. Thus on the conquest of Persia the Mahomedan soldiers of the khalifat of Bagdad traversed the length and breadth of the country, presenting the alternative of death or the Koran, and compelling the conquered nation to accept the one or the other. By these oppressive and cruel means a hundred thousand persons are said to have been forced daily to abjure the faith of their forefathers; and the fire-temples and other sacred places were destroyed or converted into mosques. Under rulers carrying out this system without pity or remorse almost the whole Zoroastrian population of Persia embraced the faith of Islam, and nearly every trace of the religion of Zoroaster became obliterated.

Historians have observed that the effect of Mahomedan conquest (for to call it a religious conversion would be impossible) was always greatly demoralising to the people. The ancient Greeks have borne testimony to the truthful character of their Persian contemporaries, while modern writers have noticed as prominently the want of this essential trait in the character of the present Mahomedans of Persia. Such of the followers of Zoroaster as obeyed the dictates of their conscience, in preference to freeing themselves from the persecution of their new

rulers by accepting the Koran, abandoned their homes and fled to the mountainous districts of Khorassan, where for a time they succeeded in evading the pursuit of their terrible foe. For about a hundred years they remained in Khorassan in the unmolested enjoyment and practice of their religion. But persecution at last reached them even in those remote districts, and they were once more compelled to flee before the enemies of their faith. A considerable number succeeded in reaching the little island of Ormus, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf.

Their stay in that place of retreat could, however, only be of short duration, for they were still within reach of their cruel persecutors. Rather than fall into the hands of the fanatical conquerors of their country, they at last determined to relinquish for ever the land of their forefathers, and to remove to some other country where they might hope to live in tranquillity and in the enjoyment of their social and religious rights. Acting upon this determination, they sought an asylum in the country of the Hindus. They are said to, and indeed must, have procured at Ormus several vessels for their transport, and, placing their wives and children on board, they set sail towards the distant shores of India. That intercourse of some sort or other had previously existed for many centuries between the ancient Persians and Hindus has been pointed out by many travellers and historians of

mediæval and modern times.[1] Some of the Hindus, who were famed for wisdom and learning, had even made Persia their residence on different occasions.

[1] "The Persian connection with India was very old, and for some centuries before the Arab conquest of Persia it had grown more close. In mythic times there was the religious connection of Zoroaster (not later than B.C. 1000, Haug's *Essays*, 299) with India and the Brahman Tchengrighatchah, who was sent back to convert his countrymen, and Firdusi's story of Prince Isfandiyar the son of Gushtasp, who was so keen a believer in Zoroaster that he persuaded the Emperor of India to adopt fire-worship (Elliot's *History*, v. 568). The Hindu account of the introduction of fire-worshipping priests from Persia into Dwarka in Kathiawar is probably of a much later date (Reinaud's *Mémoire sur l'Inde*, 391-397). There was also a very early political connection in the mythic conquests of North India, which, according to Persian writers, have been repeated from time to time since B.C. 1729 (Troyer's *Radjatarangini*, ii. 441). In historic times the Panjab formed part of the Persian dominions from its conquest by Darius Hystaspes about B.C. 510 till the later days (B.C. 350) of the Achæmenean dynasty (Rawlinson's *Ancient Monarchies*, iv. 433).

"About the beginning of the Christian era the Kanerkis, the Indian Skythian rulers of the Panjab, from the fire altar on their coins, seem to have adopted the religion of the Magi (Lassen in *J. B. A. S.*, ix. 456; Prinsep's *Note on Hist. Res. from Bactrian Coins*, 106). As regards the south of India, Ptolemy's (150) mention of Brahmani Magi has been thought to show a connection with Persia, but the Kanarese word *mag*, or son, seems a simple and sufficient explanation.

"Closer relations between India and Persia date from the revival of Persian power under the Sassanian kings (A.D. 226-650). In the fifth century the visit of the Persian prince Behram Gor (436), probably to ask for help in his struggle with the White Huns (Wilson's *Ariana Antiqua*, 383), his marriage with a Hindu princess, and according to Hindu accounts, his founding the dynasty of the Gardhabin kings, was a fresh bond of intimacy (Wilford, *As. Res.*, ix. 219; Maçudi's *Prairies d'Or*, ii. 191; Reinaud's *Mémoire sur l'Inde*, 112; Elliot's *History*, ii. 159). In later times both Naoshirvan the Just (531-579) and his grandson Parvez (591-628) were united by treaties and by the interchange of rich presents with the rulers of India and Sind (Maçudi's *Prairies d'Or*, ii. 201). In connection with

It is impossible to suppose that this was the only exodus of the Persians from the land of their fathers. It can hardly be doubted that several migrations took place at successive periods, as the flame of the fanatical zeal and persecuting spirit of the Mahomedans burned more fiercely and spread further. Various meagre and unsatisfactory traditions exist concerning these migrations, the manner in which they were effected, and the total number of those who left the shores of

these treaties it is interesting to note that Naoshirvan's embassy to Pulikesi II., the ruler of Badami in the Southern Maratha Country, is believed to be the subject of one of the Ajanta Cave paintings, and another of the pictures is supposed to be copied from a portrait of Parvez and the beautiful Shirin (Fergusson in Burgess's *Ajanta Notes*, 92). According to one account, early in the seventh century a large body of Persians landed in Western India, and from one of their leaders, whom Wilford believed to have been a son of Khosru Parvez, the family of Udepur is supposed to have sprung (Gladwin's *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii. 81; Dr. Hunter, *As. Res.*, vi. 8; Wilford, *As. Res.*, ix. 233; Prinsep, *Jour. Ben. As. Soc.*, iv. 684). Wilford held that the Konkanasth Brahmans were of the same stock. But though their origin is doubtful the Konkanasths are probably older settlers than the Parsis. Besides by treaties Western India and Persia were at this time very closely connected by trade. Kosmas Indikopleustes (545) found the Persians among the chief traders in the Indian Ocean (Migne's *Patrologiæ Cursus*, lxxxviii. 446; Yule's *Cathay*, I. clxxvii. clxxix.), and his statement that the Kalyan Christians (Yule's *Cathay*, I. clxxi.) had a Persian Bishop points to close relations between Thana and the Persian gulf. Shortly after the time of Kosmas the leadership in trade passed from the Romans to the Persians, and fleets from India and China visited the Persian gulf (Reinaud's *Abulfeda*, I.-II. cccIxxxiii.-iv.) It was this close connection between West India and Persia that in 638 (H. 16) led the Khalif Omar (634-643) to found the city of Basra partly for purposes of trade and partly to prevent the Indian princes sending help to the Persians (Troyer's *Radjatarangini*, ii. 449; and *Chronique de Tabari*, iii. 401), and in the same year

the Gulf. The only information now in our possession, and to any extent reliable, is gleaned from a work entitled *Kissah-i-Sanjan*, which was compiled in the year 1600 by a Zoroastrian priest named Behman Kaikobad Sanjana, who resided at Navsari, a town situated about twenty miles south of Surat. According to that writer, the first port in India at which the earliest refugees arrived was Diu,[1] a small island in the Gulf of Cambay, lying to the south

(638-639) prompted the despatch of a fleet to ravage the Thana coasts (Elliot's *History*, i. 415). Both Tabari (838-921) and Maçudi (900-950) state that the district round Basra and the country under the King of Oman were considered by the Arabs to be part of India (*Chronique de Tabari*, iii. 401 ; *Prairies d'Or*, iv. 225), and in the seventh century it is noticed that Indians were settled in the chief cities of Persia enjoying the free exercise of their religion (Reinaud's *Abulfeda*, I.-II. cccIxxxiv.) It is worthy of note that from the sixth century, when they began to take a leading part in the trade of the East, Persians not only visited India but sailed in their own ships as far as China (Reinaud's *Abulfeda*, I.-II. cccIxxxiii.) About the time when they came to India, Parsis were settled in China as missionaries, traders, and refugees. Anquetil du Perron (*Zend Avesta*, I. cccxxxvi.) speaks of Persians going to China in the seventh century with a son of Yazdezard. According to Wilford (*As. Res.*, ix. 235), another party of refugees went in 750, when the dynasty of the Abbasid Khalifs began to rule. In 758 the Arabs and Persians were so strong in Canton that they stirred up a riot and plundered the city (Reinaud's *Abulfeda*, I.-II. cccIxxxv.) In 845 there is a mention of *Muhapas* or Mobeds in Canton (Yule's *Cathay*, I. xcvi.), and about sixty years later Maçudi notices that there were many fire temples in China (*Prairies d'Or*, iv. 86.)"—*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, p. 247.

[1] "Div or Diew was one of the earliest seats of the Portuguese power in India. It was regarded by Albuquerque as an excellent port for a settlement, one that would secure, from its advantages both marine and terrene, the permanency of the country's influence in Hindustan. After several fruitless efforts, the infamous Nugna

of the Kathiawar coast. Here, it is stated, they disembarked and took up their residence for nineteen years, at the expiration of which period they quitted Diu to find another place of settlement. The causes which led to this second migration have not been satisfactorily explained; but the following mysterious passage relating to the event occurs in the *Kissah-i-Sanjan*:—"An aged 'dastur' (high priest) reading the tablets of the stars, made an augury that it behoved them to depart from that place, and seek out another abode. All rejoiced at his words, and sailed swiftly towards Gujarat."

That misfortunes never come singly was demonstrated in the case of these ill-fated people, for they had hardly lost sight of land when a severe storm overtook the little fleet, and deprived them of all hope of reaching their destination. Rather than abandon the faith they had inherited from their fathers, they had voluntarily made themselves exiles for ever from the land that gave them birth. Their later experience had been equally hard. Refusing to be dependent upon strangers for a home, they were now at the

d'Acunha succeeded, in 1535, in obtaining possession of Diew, and within a very short time rendered it almost impregnable to the assaults of the native powers. . . . History asserts that the trade of Surat was destroyed to encourage commerce at Diew; and Osorio makes mention of the splendour of its buildings and the greatness of its maritime powers. Upon Surat recovering itself, Diew declined, and is now said to be a vast pile of dilapidation."—Briggs's *Cities of Gujarashtra.*

mercy of the treacherous deep. What wonder, then, that this little band, confused and in despair, were ready to believe that they were the sport of a merciless and irresistible fate? But, though sick at heart, their better sense does not seem, even in this extremity, to have entirely forsaken them. In their helplessness they called to mind Him who is the author of all good, the Preserver, Supporter, and Cherisher of the poor and the distressed, and who never fails to give ear to the supplications of the humble and the meek.

To rescue them from the impending danger, they are said to have offered up the following prayer to the throne of the Most High:—"O wise God, come to our assistance in this jeopardy; and we pray Thee to deliver us from the impending danger. O glorious God, we beseech Thee to gladden our hearts by removing these difficulties with which we are now surrounded. On Thy goodness, O Lord, we fully depend, and hope that the storm which has overtaken us will soon be over through Thy Divine Grace. As long as we have hopes of Thy aid, O God, we tremble not at this calamity. We have implicit faith in Thee, as the hearer of those who cry to Thee. Deliver us, therefore, O Merciful Providence, from this trouble, and lead us to the right path, that we may escape from this sea to the shores of India, and we promise, O Lord, to kindle on high the flame sacred to Thee

in grateful remembrance of Thy kindness and protection."

We cannot doubt that this prayer of faith was heard, for the storm abated, and a gentle gale carried them in safety to Sanjan, some twenty-five miles south of Daman, where they landed about the year A.D. 716.[1] The territory of Sanjan was then under the rule of a wise and liberal chief named Jadi Rana, to whom a venerable "dastur" or high priest of the Parsis was sent, with suitable presents, in order to ascertain from him the terms on which they would be permitted to land. The "dastur," on approaching the Rana, blessed him, and, having explained the reasons which caused the Parsis to leave their native country, and detailed their sufferings and misfortunes,

[1] According to the *Kissah-i-Sanjan*, the Parsis settled at Sanjan in the year 775, but the generally accepted date of the settlement—as stated by a "dastur" or high priest of Broach named Dastur Aspandiarji Kamdinji, in a pamphlet written by him in 1826, on the question which was raised among the two sects of the Parsis, the Kadmis and Shehenshais, about the Parsi date, an account of which will be given later on—is the Hindu date Samvat 772, Shravan Shuddh 9th, and the Parsi date Roz Behman, Maha Tir. This Hindu year corresponds with 85 Yazdezardi and with the Christian year 716. Mr. Kharshedji Rastamji Kama, a Parsi Oriental scholar, has, in a learned essay published by him in the year 1870, explained that these Hindu and Parsi days do not fall together till the Christian year 936. Mr. Kama thinks that by some mistake the name of the day is substituted for that of the month and *vice versâ*. Roz Tir, Maha Behman, instead of Roz Behman, Maha Tir, gives the aforesaid Hindu date within four days of the accepted date. That there has been some confusion of dates is highly probable, owing to the accounts of the first and subsequent emigrations having been confounded with each other.

he begged that his kinsmen and he might be allowed to reside in Sanjan. It is said that the prince, struck with the warlike and hardy appearance of the men who thus came as refugees to his court, had first some fear for the safety of his throne, and before granting the desired permission requested the chief priest to explain to him the state of their affairs and the nature of their faith.

During their stay at Diu the Parsis had acquired a knowledge of the language, religion, manners and customs of the Hindus which enabled them to answer the inquiries of the Rana so satisfactorily that no opposition was made by him to their making Sanjan their place of abode. Consequently, Sanjan became the adopted country of the Parsis. The most learned among them prepared sixteen "schloks" or distichs, in which they briefly described the tenets of their religion and their mode of worship. As it will, doubtless, interest the reader to know what those "schloks" contained, they are here given in their complete form, although they must not be supposed to convey more than a very vague idea of the Parsi faith.

1*st.* We are worshippers of Ahura Mazda (Supreme Being) and the sun and the five elements.

2*d.* We observe silence while bathing, praying, making offerings to fire, and eating.

3*d.* We use incense, perfumes, and flowers in our religious ceremonies.

4*th*. We are worshippers of the cow.

5*th*. We wear the sacred garment, the *sudra* or shirt, the *kusti* or cincture for the loins, and the cap of two folds.

6*th*. We rejoice in songs and with instruments of music on the occasion of our marriages.

7*th*. We ornament and perfume our wives.

8*th*. We are enjoined to be liberal in our charities, and especially in excavating tanks and wells.

9*th*. We are enjoined to extend our sympathies towards males as well as females.

10*th*. We practise ablutions with *gaomutra*, one of the products of the cow.

11*th*. We wear the sacred girdle when praying and eating.

12*th*. We feed the sacred flame with incense.

13*th*. We practise devotion five times a day.

14*th*. We are careful observers of conjugal fidelity and purity.

15*th*. We perform annual religious ceremonies on behalf of our ancestors.

16*th*. We place great restraints on our women during and after their confinements.

The reader is here cautioned against supposing the foregoing to be the fundamental principles of the Parsi religion. The Parsis are not the idolatrous people which the preceding dogmas might lead one to suppose, and ample opportunity will be given to

the reader of forming an opinion of their true religion in subsequent pages of this work. It must, however, be frankly stated that the first Zoroastrian refugees in India played the part of dissemblers, and that these distichs were framed with the view of gaining the favour of the Hindu Rana. Although allusion is made in them to many minor ceremonies, which are no more the essentials of Zoroastrianism than of Christianity, yet, because of their approximation to certain ceremonies of the Hindus, prominence was given to them by the "dastur," while he observed silence regarding the doctrines on which the religion of Zoroaster is really based.

The Parsi refugees had had sufficient opportunities of learning at Diu how jealous the Hindus were of association with people of other castes, from the dread of contamination to themselves. Followed as they had been by continual misfortune, and cast upon the world without a country or a home, the Parsis could not but be anxious to obtain, even at a great sacrifice, a landing-place and shelter for themselves and their families. Bearing this in mind it is quite possible, and indeed probable, that they answered the inquiries of the Hindu Rana in such a form as to win his good opinion. They concealed from the prince and his subjects all that would have appeared extraordinary or offensive to them, and supplied, in place thereof, ceremonies which were exclusively Hindu in

origin. This device succeeded, for the people found favour in Jadi Rana's eyes, and permission was given them to reside in his city on the condition that they would adopt the language of the country and cease to speak that of their forefathers. They were also required to dress their females in the Indian fashion, to wear no armour, and to perform the marriage ceremonies of their children at night, in conformity with the practice of the Hindus. The exiles had but two alternatives, either to accept these conditions or to return to their ships; and, as any other race would have done under similar circumstances, they chose the former course rather than again become wanderers on the face of the earth. They rested in the land of the Rana, and occupied a large tract of waste land in the immediate vicinity of Sanjan.

After a long succession of hardships, endured for many years, the exiles had at last found a resting-place, with a reasonable prospect of enjoying repose and happiness. Every one then betook himself to his profession; and the Parsi settlement, which but a short time before had been a sterile desert, became converted, according to early writers, into a "Garden of Heaven." Neither did the Parsis forget Him who had assisted them in their day of trouble. They remembered the vow which they had made on their voyage from Diu to Sanjan, to kindle on high the flame sacred

to Him in grateful memory of their deliverance from the hand of death, and they embraced the earliest opportunity of intimating to the Hindu chief their intention of building, with his permission, a fire-temple in Sanjan, in fulfilment of the solemn pledge which they had made. As the Hindus themselves hold fire in veneration, not only was the desired permission at once and cordially accorded, but every assistance was rendered to further the object. The fire-temple was, however, wholly and exclusively constructed by the Parsis themselves. The Rana did no more than supply various articles for the purpose of expediting the great work. A few years witnessed the completion of the temple (A.D. 721), and saw the sacred fire kindled on its altar in accordance with the rites of the Zoroastrian religion.

For about three hundred years after landing at Sanjan the Parsis are said to have lived in peace and without molestation. By that time their numbers had greatly increased. Many of them had moved into other parts of India with their families. They had gone, among other places, to Cambay, Anklesvar, Variav, Vankaner, and Surat, in the north, and to Thana and Chaul in the south, places still to be easily recognised on the map of Western India. The earliest emigration from Sanjan seems to have been to Cambay. According to Mr. Robertson's account of Cambay, published in the year 1813, they were

attracted to the settlement by a variety of considerations (A.D. 942-997).[1] Here they seem to have thriven well through their commercial enterprise and industry. The settlement of Variav is supposed to be as old as that of Cambay. An inscription[2] in Pehlevi on the well-known Kennery caves in Western India shows that on the second of December A.D. 999 a number of Parsis visited the caves. From another

[1] "Some of the Parsis, who, since their arrival in India about 636, had remained in the south of Gujarat, were attracted to the settlement (942-997) near the temple of the Kumarika Kshetra at the mouth of the Mahi. The first-comers succeeding in trade, others followed, and in time the Parsi element became so strong that, by their overbearing conduct, they forced the Hindus to leave the city. Among those who fled was a man of the Dasa Lar caste of Wanias, Kalianrai by name. He took refuge in Surat, where, in a short time, by trading in pearls, he acquired a large fortune. His wealth gave him consequence, and he had the address to bring together a numerous band of Rajputs and Kolis, who in the night attacked the Parsis, putting many to the sword, and setting fire to their houses. The rest took to flight, and not a Parsi was to be seen in Kumarika Kshetra. Kalianrai then formed the design of building a city on the ruins of the Parsi town."—Account of Cambay from the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency.*

[2] The following translation of the inscription is from Mr. K. R. Kama's essay on the study of the Zoroastrian religion :—

"In the name of God, Amen. In the year 368 of Yazdezard month Avan and day Meher, we have come to this place, namely Ehan Panak of Matan Aidbar ; Mah Aidbar ; Panjbokhat and Patarbokhat of Mah Aidbar ; Mardansha of Khairad Beram and Khairad Beram of Mardansha ; Matan Aidbar of Beram Pana and Beram Pana of Matan Aidbar ; Farkhujad and Jat Aframi of Atun Mah ; Noma and Din Beram and Bujarg Atun and Khairad Mard and Bejat of Mahbajdi ; Beram Pana of Matan Bandat and the engraver of the inscription Anhoma of Avan Bandat Mandun."

Most of these appear to be related to one another.

inscription[1] in the same character it appears that other Parsis again came to see them on the 5th of November A.D. 1021.

They are next traced to Navsari, and in the year A.D. 1142 a Parsi "mobed" or priest of the name of Kamdin Yartosht is stated to have gone there from Sanjan with his family and relations for the purpose of performing the religious ceremonies of the Parsis residing at Navsari. The Parsis gave this place the name it bears, if a note in an old family paper still in the possession of the descendants of Merji Rana, the celebrated and learned high priest who flourished at Navsari about three hundred years ago, is to be trusted. According to this authority, when the Parsis arrived there in the year 511 of Yazdezard they found its climate quite as good as that of Mazandaran, one of the provinces in Persia. They named the city Navi-sari, or New Sari, and from that time it has been known as Navsari Nagmandal instead of by its former name Nagmandal.[2]

From the accounts given by early travellers in

[1] The following is a translation of the second inscription :—

"In the name of God, Amen. In the year of Yazdezard 390 month Meher and day Din we have come to this place, viz. Mah Farubag and Mah Aidbar ; Panjbokhat of Mah Aidbar ; Martansat of Khairad Beram ; Khavitabat of Beram Din Avar ; Bujarg Atun of Mah Bajdino ; Khairad Farkhuna ; Mah Aidbar and Bunsat and Mah Bandat of Aelar Mah."

[2] The editor of the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* considers that this is incorrect, as Navsari is shown on Ptolemy's map, A.D. 150.

India it appears that the Parsis had largely settled in many cities of Upper India before the middle of the ninth century. Whether they went there from Western India or direct overland from Persia by subsequent migrations it is now impossible to say. A Mahomedan traveller in the middle of the ninth century, Al Istakhiri, makes mention of some parts of Hind and Sind as having been occupied by the "Guebres," the name generally applied to the Parsis by Mahomedan writers. Ibrahim the Ghaznavid is said to have attacked in A.D. 1079 a colony of "fire-worshippers" at Dehra Dun, which shows that there were Parsis in the city prior to that event. That there were Parsis in the Panjab before A.D. 1178 rests upon more certain evidence, as a Parsi priest named Mahyar is affirmed to have gone in that year from Uch, a city at the meeting of the five rivers of the Panjab, to Seistan in Persia, for the purpose of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the religious rites of the Parsis. After six years of study under learned "dasturs" in Persia he returned to India in A.D. 1184 with a copy of the Pehlevi translation of the *Vendidad*, an important work on the Parsi religion. There appears to have been communication between the Cambay and the Panjab Parsis, as in A.D. 1323 the former possessed copies of the *Vendidad* which were brought from Persia by Mahyar. In the accounts of Timur's invasion of India we find the Parsis referred

to under the name of Magians, as being among the captives taken by him. The people who have been described as believing "in the two principles of good and evil, and acknowledging Yazdan (God) and Ahreman (Devil)," and who offered a fierce resistance to Timur at Tuglikhpur, were undoubtedly Parsis. It is said that the Gujarat colony was strengthened by a large number of Parsis who fled from the tyranny of that cruel conqueror. The mention by a Mahomedan writer of the destruction of fire-altars by the Emperor Sikandar in A.D. 1504 shows that long before that date a large number of Parsis must have lived in several cities of Upper India. Sir H. M. Elliot in his *History of India* supports Professor Dowson's opinion that the Guebres of Rohilkhand, the Magyas of Malwa, and the Maghs of Tughlikhpur are relics of the old Upper Indian Parsis, though they seem to have no religious peculiarities at the present day. From a manuscript account of Mount Abu by Sir Alexander Burnes, referred to in the Bombay *Gazetteer*, it appears that about the middle of the fifteenth century there was a Parsi settlement at Chandravli near Mount Abu.

The Parsis are supposed to have settled in Anklesvar in the middle of the thirteenth century of the Christian era, as the *Visparad*, one of the religious books of the Parsis, is believed to have been copied there in the year A.D. 1258. There is no doubt they were established at Broach before the commencement of the fourteenth

century, because a "dokhma," or tower of silence for the disposal of the dead, was built there in the year 1309 by a Parsi named Pestanji. The ruins of an older one still are to be seen at Vajalpur, a suburb of Broach. Some accounts state that direct migration from Persia to the several cities in Gujarat occupied by their kinsmen took place long after the landing of the first colony at Sanjan.

The Parsi settlements at Thana and Chaul must also have been founded at an early date, as reference is always made to them by Mahomedan and other travellers of early times in the accounts they give of those two places. Although not mentioned by name, yet from their descriptions we may conclude that the Parsis are the race spoken of, and the idea is confirmed by what Oderic, an Italian monk who travelled in India in the beginning of the fourteenth century, says —"The people thereof (Thana) are idolaters, for they worship fire and serpents and trees also, and here they do not bury the dead, but carry them with great pomp to the fields and cast them to the beasts and birds to be devoured." As the natives of India either burn or bury their dead, the above must apply to the Parsis, who subsequently deserted this place in a body. Traditionary accounts of Thana give an amusing instance of the manner in which these people escaped wholesale conversion from the religion of their forefathers to that of Christianity. That the

early Christians were not over-scrupulous in their work is shown by the wholesale conversion, in name at least, of a large mass of Hindus in Salsette, who, up to the present day, have about as much idea of Christianity as the inhabitants of Timbuctoo,—their religion being a mixture of Hindu and Christian rites and ceremonies. It would appear as if the Roman Catholic missionaries once intended to compel the Parsis in a similar way to become Christians, because tradition says that on one occasion the authorities of the place issued an order to that effect. The Parsis, seeing that open resistance would be futile, contrived by the following artful scheme to escape the religious persecution with which they were threatened. They accordingly went to the governor in a body, and said that they were ready to embrace Christianity, and that they had really felt inclined to do so before. They also expressed themselves willing to be baptized on the following Sunday, but requested two or three days' grace to enable them to worship their sacred fire for the last time, and also to have a day of rejoicing among themselves prior to their conversion. The Portuguese were so gratified at this readiness to be converted that a proclamation to this effect was issued, namely, "that on the day fixed no one should interfere with the Parsis in the performance of their rites and ceremonies or in their mode of rejoicing." The Parsis then prepared a sumptu-

ous feast, to which all the officials of the place were invited. Wine flowed freely, and the guests heartily indulged themselves. During this bacchanalian feast the Parsis, accompanied by music and dancing, took the opportunity of making their exit out of the city. Their stratagem succeeded so well that they made their way without molestation to Kalyan, twenty miles south of Thana, and settled there. Thana was thus deserted by the Parsis for about three centuries. In the year 1774, however, they returned after the English took possession of it by the terms of a treaty made with a Maratha Sardar Ragunathrao Dada Saheb. Kavasji Rastamji, Patel, or head man, of Bombay, was induced by the English to encourage the Parsis to settle at Thana once more, and in order to accomplish this he himself went with his family to that city for a time, and was entrusted with the patelship of Charnibanda, Munpesar, Trombay, Muth, Murve, Manori, Vesava, Danda, Bandora, Kalyan, Bhimardi, and other places in Salsette.

Travellers in India of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries found Parsis in many parts of the country,[1] but their numbers must have been very insignificant, for there is no important event men-

[1] In 1614 a Parsi "dastur" of the name of Azar Kevan Bin Azar Gosp died at Patna at the patriarchal age of eighty-five. He was an intelligent and a pious man. His early years were spent in seclusion and prayer in Persia, and at the age of twenty-eight he arrived in India and settled at Patna in Hindustan. He had brought with him

tioned in connection with them. After they had spread from Sanjan to other places in Gujarat, two or three centuries elapsed during which we may suppose that nothing of importance occurred, and certainly no mention is made of anything if it did occur. All that we are told is that the Parsis chiefly occupied themselves wherever they settled in agricultural pursuits. They seem to have lived amicably with the Hindus, for during this long period of five hundred years no misunderstanding between them and the children of the soil is ever mentioned.

About the year 1305 a circumstance occurred which roused the old fire and warlike spirit of the Parsis. In that year they are affirmed to have greatly distinguished themselves in assisting the Hindu chief of Sanjan against the aggression of Muhamed Shah or Ala-ud-din Khilji. This chief formed a design for subverting the independence of Sanjan, and despatched to Gujarat a large army under a skilful general named Alp Khan to effect that object.[1]

several Zoroastrian disciples from Persia, and a number of Mahomedans and Hindus are said to have become his followers. He was a philosopher, and taught the religion philosophically to his disciples, and also wrote a work on the philosophy of religion entitled *Mukasefale Azar Kevan* (Dabistan).

[1] Dr. J. Wilson (*J. B. B. R. A. S.*, i. 182) has suggested that the Mahmud Shah of the *Kissah-i-Sanjan* was Mahmud Begada, who reigned in Gujarat from 1459 to 1513. The mention of Champaner as his capital makes it probable that the writer of the *Kissah-i-Sanjan* thought the Mussulman prince was the well-known Mahmud Begada. But the completeness of Alp Khan's conquest of Gujarat

The Mahomedan general, with thirty thousand men, arrived before Sanjan, and the Hindu ruler, conscious of his insufficient resources to enable him to cope with the hardy soldiers of the enemy, trembled for his crown and country. He solicited the assistance of the Parsis, and summoning them to his presence addressed them as follows :—"My ancestors exalted you and lavished favours upon your people, and it behoves you in this my difficulty to show your gratitude and to exert yourself on my behalf, and lead the way in battle." The Parsis were not unmindful of their obligations to the former rulers of Sanjan, and at once undertook to defend the country which had so hospitably welcomed their forefathers to its shores. They replied to the address of the chief, "Fear not, O Prince, on account of this army: all of us are ready to scatter the heads of thy foes, and we will fight as long as a drop of blood remains in our veins. In battle we never give way; not one man of us will turn his back though a millstone be dashed at his

leaves little doubt that Sanjan fell to his arms. The conqueror might, possibly, though much less likely, be Muhammad Shah Tughlik, who reconquered Gujarat and the Thana coast in 1348. It cannot be Mahmud Begada, as authorities agree that, after long wanderings, the Sanjan fire was brought to Navsari early in the fifteenth century (1419). Alp Khan may be Ulugh Khan, Ala-ud-din's brother, who is sometimes by mistake called Alp Khan, or he may be Alp Khan, Ala-ud-din's brother-in-law. Ulugh Khan conquered Gujarat (1295-1297), and Alp Khan governed Gujarat (1300-1320). The Alp Khan of the text was probably Ulugh Khan (Elliot, iii. 157, 163).—*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency.*

head." In making this resolve the Parsis were not unmindful of the persecutions sustained by their ancestors, and they determined that the Mahomedan invaders should be repelled if by any sacrifice of theirs victory could be achieved. The cause of the Hindu ruler was their own; they knew that if the army of the Sultan was successful their religion would again be imperilled, and that a second persecution of their faith would follow. Notwithstanding their oath never to bear arms, they considered that this extremity fully justified them in drawing the sword to defend the territories of the Hindu ruler, and accordingly a force of fourteen hundred Zoroastrians, under the leadership of one Ardeshir, was immediately added to the Hindu army.

This accession to his force caused the Hindu prince to take courage; every preparation was made for the impending struggle, which was to decide the fate of his kingdom. Soon the opposing armies met, and a fierce battle was fought a few miles beyond Sanjan. Sword, javelin, and arrow did their deadly work, and many fell on both sides. In the thick of the battle the Hindus were unable to keep their ground against the furious onslaught of the Mahomedans, and fled from the field. The noble band of Persian allies, however, was not dismayed. Fighting for their faith and their homes, the important interests involved in the issue of the contest made them regardless of their

lives. Their brave leader, Ardeshir, heroically led them on, and at length they broke the enemy's ranks and threw them into confusion. The whole force was soon discomfited, and Alp Khan fled, leaving Ardeshir and his little band conquerors on the field.

In the old wars which disturbed India before the British rule Mahomedan armies were generally successful over Hindu from the more hardy and warlike character of their soldiers. This defeat of many thousands of their number was rendered the more humiliating from the fact of its having been caused by a handful of comparative strangers. The blow to their proud spirit was more than they could tamely endure. Alp Khan raised reinforcements and again appeared in the field. Ardeshir, emboldened by success, was not, however, to be daunted, and he addressed the Hindu chief in the following spirited terms:—"O Prince, the enemy has appeared in greater numbers than before. They are a hundred to our one, but behold our courage. We will either yield our lives or take those of our foes, and in this resolve may God befriend us, since He always removes our difficulties."

In the battle that followed Ardeshir engaged in single combat one of the most notable of the Mahomedan chiefs. The gallant Parsi general hurled him from his horse and killed him with his sword. Alp Khan, it is said, on witnessing the scene, became furiously excited, and led in person a heavy charge

against the Parsis. The two armies joined in battle; the carnage on both sides was great, and blood flowed in torrents. Fortune did not favour the allies on this occasion. A dart struck the Parsi leader, who fell headlong from his saddle, and, as is the case with all Oriental nations, the army, having lost its chief, hesitated and gave way, and was completely routed by the enemy. The Hindu prince is also said to have fallen in this battle. Alp Khan was now master of Sanjan, and the Parsis soon found it impossible to call that place any longer their home.[1]

After the overthrow of the Hindu government the Parsis suffered many wrongs at the hands of the Mahomedan troops, and in consequence the greater part of them fled to the mountains of Bahrut,[2] about eight miles east of Sanjan, taking with them the sacred fire which they had consecrated at the latter place. Here, however, they did not remain long. According to the *Kissah-i-Sanjan*, the fugitives, after a sojourn of twelve years, quitted this mountainous district, and, still carrying their sacred fire, went to a place called Bansda, about fifty miles north-east of Navsari, where a few Parsi families had already settled, and

[1] In the year 1839, when the great Bombay missionary, Dr. John Wilson, visited Sanjan, he found only one or two Parsi families there, but not a single Parsi is residing there at the present day, and the ruins of a "dokhma" or tower of silence for the dead are now the only monument that exists of Parsi settlement in that place.

[2] A cave is still shown in the mountain in which the sacred fire was kept.

after another fourteen years (*i.e.* A.D. 1331) they bore the sacred fire to Navsari, where the Parsis had already become an opulent and influential race. But, remembering that A.D. 1419 is generally accepted as the year in which the sacred fire was brought to Navsari, it may well be presumed that between the flight of the Parsis from Sanjan and the recovery of their influence and freedom in religious worship a period of not twenty-six but of a hundred years must have elapsed.

From Navsari the fire was removed to Surat in the year 1733, as about that time there was some apprehension on account of the Pindari inroads into that city. It was again removed to Navsari three years later, when, owing to disputes among the priesthood, it was transferred in 1741 to Balsar, and after being there for some time it was taken to Udvada on the 28th October 1742, where it still exists. On account of its being the oldest fire-temple of the Zoroastrians in India, it is held by them in the highest possible veneration.[1]

Nothing worth chronicling is known of the history of those Parsis who, before the overthrow of the Hindu

[1] The building in which this sacred fire is now located was built in the year 1830 at the expense of Messrs. Dadabhai and Mancherji Pestanji Wadia, in memory of their father, Pestanji Bamanji Wadia. When originally brought to Udvada it was kept in a place built at the expense of a Parsi of Nargol. Thence it was removed to a building provided by one Bhikhaji Edalji of Surat, and subsequently to another erected by Jamshedji Nanabhai Gazdar of Bombay.

Rana of Sanjan, had migrated to other cities of Gujarat.

The emigrants, wherever they located themselves, pursued the quiet and peaceful art of husbandry. But their national energy and courage never seem to have forsaken them, in proof of which an affair at Variav may be cited. A small Parsi colony had settled at that place, which is situated at some distance from Surat. It was at the time under the rule of the Raja of Ratanpur, a Rajput chief. This chief attempted to exact an extraordinary tribute from the Parsis, but the latter, refusing to submit to the extortion, opposed and defeated the troops sent to enforce the demand.

Unable to avenge themselves openly, the soldiers of the raja sought an opportunity of surprising those who had defeated them in the field, and a marriage festival, to which all the Parsis in the place had been invited, was chosen as affording the most favourable occasion for gratifying their cowardly revenge. Unconscious of what was impending, the Parsis were surprised in the midst of their festivities, and, together with the women and children, were ruthlessly massacred by these ruffians. The anniversary of this cruel outrage perpetrated upon the Parsis at Variav is still observed at Surat, and religious ceremonies are performed in honour of those who fell on that disastrous occasion.

The Parsi settlement at Surat[1] is not so old as those at other places in Gujarat, but it was there that

[1] Anquetil du Perron thus gives the origin of the city of Surat as he heard it from Narbez, the librarian of the last Mahomedan Subedar of Ahmedabad.

"In the reign of Mahmoud Begada, fifth King of Ahmedabad, who flourished about the close of the fifteenth century, there were (in the vicinity of a place where, in 1760, stood the house of Fares Khan, hakim of the town) several huts of fishmongers, who had at their head a man of their profession, named Suratji. This chief paid the dues of his little village to the Hakim (*i.e.* to the Governor) of Rander (a small town situate on the northern bank of the Tapti), who ruled the country on behalf of the King of Ahmedabad. The Portuguese, in their incursions, having plundered the banks of that river, Suratji, whose people were without any means of defence, and who had suffered considerably, carried his complaints to the King of Ahmedabad. This prince, having inquired what the land of these fishermen could produce, ordered Khodavand Khan, Governor of Rander, to erect a fortress, which might place the town of Suratji under shelter from every insult. Khodavand Khan at first chose the site on the place where there now is his tomb, near the house of Fares Khan and that of Fakir Kheirulla; but as it was at some distance from the river, the choice of it was abandoned. He then pitched upon another site near Bagh Talao, where there now are shroffs (bankers) about half a coss from the river. This was also abandoned for the same reason, it being found difficult to carry water from the river to that distance, in order to fill up the ditches with which he intended to surround the fortress. At last its foundations were laid in the place where it now stands; and Khodavand Khan promised Suratji to give the latter's name to this city, as a reward for the site which he ceded to him (Khodavand Khan). This city was then called Surat after Suratji. An inscription informs us that the fortress was completed only in 931 Hijri (A.D. 1524). The town rose with the times; in 1666 it had yet only some walls of earth in very bad state. The first *enceinte* was constructed some years after, and the second some more than fifty years ago, under the nabobship of Hyder Kuli Khan: each has twelve gates, and is adorned with round towers where some guns are to be seen."—Translation of extracts from the *Zend-Avesta* of Anquetil du Perron, by Kavasji Edalji Kanga.

the Parsis first gained some considerable importance and came into contact with Europeans. The earliest period at which we find any mention of them in this city of the Great Mogul is in the year 1478.

No authentic records exist to show the exact date of the arrival of the Parsis in Bombay, nor can we authoritatively explain what was the motive that first led them there. It seems probable that the English merchants of Surat induced some of them to settle in Bombay for purposes of trade. This much may, however, be safely affirmed, that their first settlement in that island was a little before the time when it was ceded to the British by the Crown of Portugal, as the dowry of Catherine, Princess of that country, who became the wife of Charles the Second of England, A.D. 1668.

Dr. Fryer, who visited Bombay in the year 1671, says: "On the other side of the great inlet to the sea is a great point abutting against Old Woman's Island, and is called Malabar Hill, a rocky woody mountain, yet sends forth long grass; *on the top of all is a Parsi tomb lately raised.*"[1] The first work of the Parsis wherever they settle is to construct a tower of silence or what Dr. Fryer calls a tomb for the reception of their dead, and his statement that the tomb

[1] This "dokhma" still exists on Malabar Hill. It was built by one Hirji Watcha, an ancestor of the Watcha Ghandhi family of the present day.

in question had been recently raised is a sufficient proof that no considerable number of the Parsis could have settled in that island prior to its cession to the English.

We have now brought down our history to the arrival of the Parsis in Bombay. Their rise and progress in this island will be described in subsequent pages. In the immediately succeeding chapter it is proposed to inquire into the state of those of the Zoroastrians who are still to be met with in their native country.

CHAPTER II.

THE ZOROASTRIANS IN PERSIA.

The Zoroastrians in Persia—The misfortunes of that state—Majority of people adopt Mahomedanism—The Zoroastrian colonies—The Ghilji Afghans—Their invasion of Persia—The part taken by the Zoroastrians—Their treatment by Nadir Shah and his successors—They gradually lose their ancient books—The wretched condition of Parsis in Persia—The poll-tax or "jazia"—Cruel exactions in order to raise it—The appeal to the Bombay Parsis—Called the Guebres—Made the victims of harsh laws—Cases of tyranny—Mahomedan slaying a Parsi—The reverse—Other offences—The Persian Zoroastrians retain their characteristics—Their love of truth and morality—Efforts of the Bombay Parsis in their behalf—Views of the author—"The Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund"—Statement of its objects—Abolition of the "jazia"—Pressure brought to bear on the Shah—Deputations and letters—Ultimate success—Those who obtained it—Other objects of the fund—A picturesque legend—The slaughtering of cows—A beneficent reform—The present condition of Persia.

An inquiry into the present state of those who profess the religion of Zoroaster would manifestly be incomplete if it did not embrace those members of the race who have held fast to their faith in the mother-country even after its conquest by the Moslem. The effect of Mahomedan rule, wherever established, is too well known to need any lengthened description. Within a hundred years of the time when the followers of the Arabian Prophet first set foot on Persian soil, the condition of the country had entirely

changed. Lands once fertile had become dreary wastes, and fields where the golden corn had waved, now deserted by the husbandman, afforded pasture for wild animals; while the ploughshares were beaten into swords, and the pruning-hooks had been exchanged for spears. Hence the country which had been the home of peace and prosperity was thrown into the greatest confusion, and hordes of robbers, driven to crime by the distress of the times, traversed every part of the land, perpetrating the most cruel atrocities.

Persia once fallen never revived, but sank gradually into its present insignificance. Perhaps no country in the world has witnessed so many revolutions as that unhappy land. The tyrants who have filled the throne owed their elevation to treachery and bloodshed. The followers of every religion, with the exception of that of Islam, have endured constant persecution, while those of the inhabitants who adhered to the ancient faith of Zoroaster have experienced the greatest barbarities. Constant oppression and tyranny have naturally reduced their numbers. In less than two centuries after the invasion the greater part of the population had embraced Islamism. In the tenth century of the Christian era remnants of the Zoroastrian population were only to be found in the provinces of Fars and Kerman; and the reader may form an idea of

the rate at which that remnant has declined even in recent times when it is stated that, while about a hundred and fifty years ago it numbered one hundred thousand souls, it does not at present exceed seven or eight thousand.

The Zoroastrians of Persia are now almost exclusively confined to Yezd and the twenty-four surrounding villages. From accounts furnished to the Persian Amelioration Society of Bombay by its agent in Persia, it appears that in the year 1854 there were in the first-mentioned city and the surrounding villages one thousand houses or families, representing a population of 6,658 souls, of whom 3,310 were males and 3,348 females. Of these about twenty or twenty-five were merchants, but by far the larger number gained a scanty subsistence as tillers of the soil. A few of the poorer class worked as artisans, bricklayers, carpenters, and weavers, or followed other mechanical occupations. At Kerman the number of Parsis does not exceed four hundred and fifty, while in the capital of Persia (Teheran) there are only about fifty merchants of this race. A small number of the humbler class are, however, employed as gardeners in the palace of the Shah, and at Shiraz some families are found occupying the grade of shopkeepers.

At no time after the overthrow of their ancient monarchy were the Zoroastrian residents of Persia

happy under the succeeding rulers. In a letter received in the year 1511 from them by their brethren at Navsari, they stated that never since the rule of Kaiomars had they suffered more than what they were then undergoing. In sooth, they declared that they were more oppressed than their race had ever been at the hands of the tyrants Zohak, Afrasiab, Tur, and Alexander.

Within the last two hundred years four revolutions have greatly conduced to the destruction of the Zoroastrian population of Kerman, which is now reduced to the insignificant number we have mentioned. The Ghilji Afghans, who had long groaned under the misrule of Persia, determined at last to emancipate themselves, and raised the standard of rebellion under an able chief named Mir Vais, who in a short time made himself master of Kandahar. The Persian monarch Sultan Husen, unable to reduce them by force of arms, sent emissaries to persuade them into submission, but the messengers were treated with contempt. The next Afghan chief who succeeded to the authority of Mir Vais determined to invade Persia, and a favourable opportunity soon presented itself. At the moment when the north-eastern frontier of the kingdom was threatened by the Abdali Afghans of Herat, and while the Arabian ruler of Muscat was seizing the country bordering on the Gulf, Mahamud (who had succeeded his father,

Mir Vais, in the government of Kandahar) carried out what had been his father's desire, and invaded the empire whose rulers had so long oppressed his nation.

The following account, by Sir John Malcolm, of the Afghan leader's first entry into Persia gives a terrible picture of the misery to which the inhabitants of Kerman were subjected by both the invaders and their own rulers :—

"He (Mahamud) resolved to penetrate that country by the province of Kerman, preferring a march over the desert of Seistan to the obstacles which presented themselves in every other direction. Though he took every precaution to surmount the difficulties of the march, he lost many men and horses ; but his appearance was so unexpected, and his force so considerable, that the city and province of Kerman immediately submitted to his arms. This ready acknowledgment of his authority did not save the inhabitants from suffering the most intolerable oppression, and it was with joy they learned that Lutf Ali Khan had left the sea coast and was hastening to their relief. That chief, who had collected a considerable force, attacked and defeated the Afghan prince, and compelled him to fly to Kandahar. Kerman, however, was only exposed, by this victory, to a repetition of what it had before suffered ; and when Lutf Ali Khan marched from that province, it was difficult to say whether the invasion of the Afghans or the advance of the Persian army to their relief had been most ruinous to its inhabitants."

During this invasion by the Ghilji Afghans the Zoroastrians of Kerman drank their full share of the cup of suffering. Indeed it would almost seem as if they were made the special objects of the vengeance of the Persian troops, at whose hands they suffered heavy losses both by massacre and compulsory conversion.

In the second invasion of Persia by Mahamud he raised levies among the Zoroastrians of both the provinces of Kerman and Yezd, persuading them to join his banner by appealing to their miseries. They, remembering their ancestors and the wrongs which they endured at the hands of the Persians, eagerly seized what seemed the opportunity to obtain revenge at the same time that they might gain some honour and renown. The proposal seems to have been readily accepted, probably in the hope that the success of the Afghan chief would tend to alleviate the oppression to which they had been constantly subjected by the Persians. It is unnecessary to follow Mahamud in his various successes, or to describe his final victory at Isfahan and the capture of that city. How the Zoroastrians, who formed a portion of the army of Mahamud, fared at the hands of the chief in the hour of victory we are altogether ignorant. We are not even told what became of them afterwards, but we can imagine that, however valuable their services, they received little substantial reward from the Mahomedan leader. We might even infer, from the condition of their descendants, that they obtained very much the reverse of what they had expected or deserved.

It is stated that in the reigns of Nadir Shah and his successor the remnants of this persecuted race were again offered the alternative of death or conver-

sion. Moreover, about a hundred years ago, when Aga Mahomed Khan Kujur conquered Kerman in a war with Lutf Ali Khan Zand, many of the Zoroastrian race were put to the sword by that merciless ruler. When these various circumstances are taken into consideration it ceases to be a matter of wonder that a population very recently numbering many thousands of people should have been nearly exterminated by the cruelties of successive tyrants. The numerous ruins of fire-temples in the city of Kerman, at this day, prove that it must have been, at no very remote period, the abode of a considerable population of the Zoroastrian persuasion.

We could not expect, after the revolutions, persecutions, and oppressions to which the small body who may claim to be the descendants of the ancient Persians have been subjected, that they should to-day possess any of their religious books or be well informed respecting the tenets of their religion. Among all the vicissitudes of their race they have, however, adhered most devotedly to the form of faith which descended to them from their ancestors, and they could give no stronger proof of their staunchness. At one time the Parsis in India believed that copies of their ancient books, which they did not possess, could be furnished to them by their co-religionists in Persia; but this was soon shown to be a delusion. The accounts of their condition given by

European travellers, by the Parsis who had gone to Persia to obtain information connected with their religion, and also by the Iranis who have visited India in our time, set all expectations at rest on that point. They showed that, instead of being in a position to impart knowledge, the Zoroastrians of the fatherland needed advice and instruction from those in India.

They have still, it is true, their fire-temples (thirty-four of them, both great and small, are situated in Yezd and its vicinity), but they possess no ancient liturgical books except those in the possession of their brethren in India. Professor Westergaard of Copenhagen, who visited Persia in the year 1843, wrote to his friend, the late Dr. Wilson of Bombay, as follows on this subject:—

"I stopped at Yezd eleven days, and though I often went out among them, I did not see more than sixteen or seventeen books in all; two or three copies of the *Vendidad Sade* and the *Izeshine* (which they call *Yaçna*), and six or seven of the *Khorde Avesta*, of which I got two and part of a third. These, besides part of the *Bundesh* and part of another Pehlevi book, were all I could get, though I tried hard to obtain more, especially part of the *Izeshine* with a Pehlevi, or as they say, Pazand translation, of which there is only one copy in Europe—at Copenhagen."

The same learned traveller, speaking of the Zoroastrians now residing in Kerman, says:—

"The Guebres here are more brutalised than their brethren at Yezd. They had only two copies of the *Vendidad* and *Yaçna*, but a great many of the *Khorde Avesta*, which, however, they

would not part with. No one here can read Pehlevi. They complain that when Aga Mahomed Khan gave the town up to indiscriminate plunder and slaughter, most of their books were destroyed, and great numbers of the race were killed."

We have thus seen how wretched is the general condition of the Zoroastrians remaining in Persia. The few who can be called rich belong to the merchant class; and besides these there are perhaps none who can be said to be even in good circumstances, while the great majority are in a state of extreme poverty.

One of the severest hardships under which these people suffered, until quite recently, was the levy of the poll-tax, called "jazia." The Moslem population alone was exempt from this tax,—all "unbelievers" residing in the kingdom, such as Armenians, Jews, and Parsis, being compelled to pay it. The Armenians at Tabriz and in other places of Persia contiguous to the Russian frontier had been exempted from the payment of it, a favour which they owed to the influence of the Russian Government. The straits to which these races were driven in order to meet this tax were often deplorable. We have no means of knowing the exact amount of the impost which the Armenians and Jews were required to pay, but it has been ascertained that the annual tax leviable on the Parsis, according to the imperial order, was six hundred and sixty-seven tomans. As is the case, however, in all Oriental kingdoms, the governors

or collectors and magistrates enhanced the amount by their own commissions, and consequently the sum required to be paid by these poor people often amounted to as much as two thousand tomans.[1] According to statistics supplied to the author from authentic sources, it appears that about a thousand grown-up Parsis were required to pay the tax. Of these, two hundred were able to bear the burden without difficulty, four hundred paid it with great inconvenience, while the rest were unable to do so at all, even at the point of the sword.

Upon the annual collection of the tax the scenes presented at the homes of those who were unable to pay it were most terrible to witness. Unheard-of cruelties were practised in the vain attempt to extort money from those who had none for even their own wants. Some, to save themselves from torture, and as the last resource, gave up their religion and embraced the faith of Mahomed, when they were relieved from the payment of the tax. Others, who would not violate their conscience, abandoned their homes to escape the exactions of the tax-gatherer. These determined individuals, even when they escaped, had always to leave their wives and children behind them. Ground down by poverty, it is not strange that they were unable to pay the smallest tax. In this miserable condition the Zoroastrians of Persia looked to

[1] Equivalent to £1000 of our money.

their co-religionists in India for rescue. The few who from time to time have found their way to Bombay often asked the question, "Cannot the influential Parsis of Bombay do something to relieve our countrymen in Persia through the representation of the British ambassador to the court of Teheran? The court of St. Petersburg, and other European powers, have obtained various rights and privileges for the Christian inhabitants of Persia, and why cannot the English do as much for the Parsis?" This appeal did not remain unanswered, as will be seen later on, by the Parsis of Bombay.

It is not to be concealed that the Persian Government has very negligently observed its promises in regard to the Christians who inhabit its dominions. In the capital, where these people are immediately under the protection of the ambassadors of the Christian courts, their condition is comparatively easy, but in the provinces they are a prey, equally with the Jews and the Parsis, to the tyranny of the local governors and the fanatical race among whom they dwell.

The treatment which the Zoroastrians endure at the hands of the Mahomedan subjects of the Persian monarchy is harsh and oppressive. They are contemptuously styled "Guebres," and experience from the Mussulmans much the same sort of treatment as the low-caste Mahar in India receives at the hands of

the high-caste Hindu. A Mahomedan, who, without prejudice to himself, holds intercourse with every other caste, considers the touch of a "Guebre" as a pollution, and the latter is consequently debarred from following such occupations as are likely to bring him into contact with his oppressor.

Many other causes stand in the way of a Zoroastrian gaining a profitable or even an easy livelihood in Persia. In trade, credit must often be given to the purchaser, and the extreme difficulty which Zoroastrians find in recovering their claims from "true believers" is a great bar to the hearty or effective pursuit of commerce. "The Mahomedan law against debtors," says Sir John Malcolm, "is sufficiently severe, but the law is in no point favourable to what are termed in its language unbelievers." We see it mentioned on the same authority that an eminent Christian merchant, who resided many years in Persia, and who enlightened Europe by his observations on that country, states that nothing but the establishment of the Urf or customary law, which is administered by the secular magistrates, could enable a person not of the Mahomedan faith to carry on any commercial transactions in Persia. The bigotry of the priests, and the one-sided nature of their law, which is nothing more than that of the Koran and its traditions, would deprive him of every hope of justice. When an application was made to the court of Sherrah by a

non-believer against a Mahomedan bankrupt, the latter was so sheltered under its forms and prescriptive laws that it was declared impossible to attach his goods for the payment of debts.

Of other instances of the injustice of the law against those who do not adopt the dominant religion of Persia, one deserves prominent notice. If a rich man of some different creed dies, any distant relative who may have embraced Mahomedanism can claim his property in preference to the deceased's own lawful children. Such injustice speaks for itself; comment on it is unnecessary.

Not only is a Parsi thus deprived of his civil rights, but in every respect his position is one of constant inconvenience and sometimes of peril. If a Mahomedan, whether from bigotry or malice, kills a Parsi, Jew, or any "unbeliever," there is no redress. The culprit is either slightly fined, as the value of a "kafir's" life is very lightly estimated, or he is acquitted on some trifling pretext. A few recent instances will suffice to prove our statement. An Armenian resident of Tabriz was killed by a Moslem. The murderer was fined seven tomans (three pounds ten shillings) and the sum offered to the heirs of the deceased. The latter declined to accept it, and demanded that a punishment should be inflicted on the offender equal to the guilt of his crime. Their remonstrances were unheeded, and the murderer was set at large to

glory in having shed the blood of a "kafir." At Yezd two Parsis were murdered by some Mahomedans. The criminals were paupers and unable to pay a fine. They were then set at liberty, the judge declaring it to be unjust to imprison the followers of Mahomed for laying violent hands on mere "kafirs." Even so recently as 1874 an act of the most flagrant injustice occurred. A respectable and wealthy Zoroastrian merchant, named Rashid Meherban, was shot and killed in the public bazaar of Yezd by one Rujub Ali, a Mahomedan. After committing the brutal deed the murderer escaped through the assistance afforded him by the sympathising crowd. The authorities made no effort whatever to trace the culprit and bring him to justice. Owing, however, to the exertions of the murdered man's relatives who were resident in Bombay, and who spared neither pains nor money to trace the murderer, the criminal was at last discovered in Bushire. The authorities at Shiraz were applied to for the purpose of executing justice, and the governor of that city ordered the accused to be sent for trial to Yezd. There, however, nothing was done to bring the offender before a tribunal. Meanwhile Rashid Meherban's relatives sent from Bombay several telegrams and memorials to the ministers of the Shah, as well as to the Shah himself, pressing for justice. These sustained efforts led to the authorities at Teheran giving orders to the

Governor of Shiraz to send the criminal to the capital. These orders were of course obeyed, and the accused was given in charge of the mounted police to be taken to that city. The culprit again made his escape through the connivance of the guard while at Goam, and took refuge in a holy place called Imamjada Hazrati Masuma. According to the law of Islam, no person, however great his offence, can be arrested in a sanctuary, and the murderer remained there for a long period. It is stated that he has since been pardoned on the recommendation of the "Mousted," the highest religious lawgiver, who declared that, as the Zoroastrian acted in violation of the law of Islam, a true believer committed no offence in slaying him! Thus the villain, who ought long ago to have forfeited his life, is still at large, perhaps posing as a martyr for having been arraigned when he had performed a meritorious action.

Let us now see how justice is reversed in cases when the murder of a Mahomedan has been perpetrated. A Jew had a claim against a Mahomedan for a sum of money, and the latter refusing to pay it, both of them came to blows, in which the Mahomedan lost his life. As the victim was a "believer," the fine was one thousand tomans besides imprisonment, which was promptly imposed and carried out. The Mahomedan law is founded on the Koran, and the administrators of it are the "mullas" or priests, whose decision is

invariably given against the "unbeliever," whether he be in the right or the wrong.

The sanctuary of the fire-temples and towers of silence belonging to the Parsis is often invaded, and any appeal to the authorities is usually unheeded, if not altogether treated with contempt. Rare instances have, however, occurred when justice has been done to the aggrieved party, but even then it has served as a pretext for some further mischief on the part of the Mahomedans. An event of this character happened a few years ago. A Parsi of Kerman, having suffered an injury at the hands of a Mahomedan priest, appealed to the Shah at Teheran, and the "mulla" was immediately summoned before the court, and ordered to give the amplest satisfaction for the wrong he had done. The Mahomedan, though forced at the time to comply with the mandate of authority, eagerly watched for an opportunity to take his revenge upon the other. In Persia all laws remain in abeyance on the death of a monarch till a successor has been placed on the throne. During this interregnum people are not answerable for their crimes, and no notice can be legally taken of their conduct. The "mulla," therefore, thought that such a period would afford an excellent opportunity for satisfying his revenge, and on the death of the Shah he stirred up the Mahomedan mob to kill every unbeliever in Kerman, as a work enjoined upon them by the holy

Koran. The Parsis were the first victims of this popular fury, and many of them were killed, including, we may assume, the particular object of the "mulla's" hatred.

Such instances are of frequent occurrence. It is said that the present Shah and his ministers are not wilfully guilty of injustice. There is merely, as must be the case in all half-civilised despotic states, no uniform system of law under their government for the guidance and regulation of the conduct of officers entrusted with the administration of justice and charged with the security of the lives and property of the subjects. The principal check upon these officers is the dread of superiors to whom the injured can always appeal. They regulate their actions according to the disposition of the despot of the day, and are active and just, or corrupt and cruel, as he happens to be vigilant and virtuous, or avaricious and tyrannical. That the majority of the sovereigns who have sat on the throne of Persia have belonged to the latter class is not to be disputed; and we hope that the present Shah, who has often proved himself a humane and enlightened monarch, will long be spared to make his crown renowned for clemency and justice to his subjects of every creed.

The physical and moral condition of the Parsis in Persia has remained little changed since the time when they called the country their own. Centuries

of oppression have not destroyed the strong, hardy, and muscular appearance of the Zoroastrian. He is greatly superior in strength to the modern effeminate and luxurious Persian, and is ever willing to work when he can find employment. Contact with a weak and idle race has not exercised any perceptible influence on those habits of industry for which his early ancestors were remarkable. The Zoroastrian is taught by his religion to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, whereas the Moslem is brought up to believe that he will be the favoured of God by becoming a fakir and living on alms. It is a fact creditable to the blood which flows in Zoroastrian veins that the race has not degenerated by contact with those to whom fate has made them subject.

As much may be said of their moral conduct. Even the Mahomedans, their inveterate enemies, admit the fact. Their women, the majority of whom belong to poor families, are noted for their chastity; while the men are known for their morality. In the garden adjoining the harem of the Shah none but Zoroastrians are employed as gardeners on account of their good moral character. They are also remarkable for their love of truth, a virtue which has been highly extolled in their ancestors by both ancient and modern historians.

We have now to describe the efforts which the Bombay Parsis have made for the mitigation of the

oppression and for the removal of the various disadvantages under which their brethren in Persia have so long been suffering. The author, in a work on the Parsis published a quarter of a century ago, after reciting the hardships to which they were subjected, expressed himself as follows:—"But can we ourselves do nothing for our unfortunate co-religionists in Persia? Our community possesses considerable weight, and includes amongst its members names known all over the world for their exertions in the cause of humanity, and the amelioration of the condition of their countrymen generally. A deputation, therefore, of our race to the Persian Court, duly accredited by the English Government, and presented by the British Ambassador at Teheran, might, we believe, remonstrate with success against the cruelties now practised upon our Zoroastrian brethren in Persia. The amount raised by the capitation tax now levied upon them, and which is attended by circumstances of so much cruelty, must be to the imperial revenue insignificant in the extreme, and it is not improbable that a dignified representation on the subject made by a suitable embassy from the Parsis of India might succeed in abolishing it. Persian princes seldom know the true state of their subjects, and we cannot but think that our countrymen would reflect honour upon themselves by an adequate effort to relieve the miseries of our Zoroastrian brethren in the fatherland."

This was written twenty-five years ago, and the means which the Parsis of Bombay adopted for obtaining redress of the grievances from which their poor co-religionists suffered in their parent-country have been exactly those which we then suggested, as will be seen from the following narrative. Their unhappy condition appears to have excited the deepest sympathy in Bombay some years before the more systematic efforts which we are about to detail began in their behalf. These date as far back as 1854, when the first Parsi emissary was sent to Persia. From that year the exertions of the Parsi community in this cause have been conducted with a zeal and a pertinacity which reflect the greatest credit on those concerned from time to time with the management of the charity known as "The Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund." The public appeal made by the trustees of an earlier fund, at the beginning of 1854, led to their deputing to Persia Mr. Manakji Limji Antaria, a gentleman well qualified by previous experience for the duties to be performed during so important a mission. A subscription list which was put in circulation among the Zoroastrians of Bombay was cheerfully and liberally filled up, and Mr. Manakji was despatched on the 31st of March 1854 with explicit instructions to inquire into and report upon the social, political, and intellectual condition of the Zoroastrians in Persia. The impetus thus given to this benevolent under-

taking was quickened by the pathetic details received from Persia regarding the deplorable state into which the victims of Mussulman misrule had fallen, and an influential meeting was held in Bombay on the 11th of January 1855, under the presidency of the late Mr. Manakji Nasarvanji Petit, for the consideration of Mr. Manakji Antaria's report. It dwelt in great detail on the impoverished condition of the Iranis, which chiefly arose from the levying of the oppressive poll-tax, called the "jazia"; on the varied forms of individual tyranny; and on their utterly defenceless position in the midst of a fanatical population. These circumstances, the recital of which aroused heartfelt sympathy at the meeting, led to the unanimous adoption of the chairman's proposal to establish a distinct fund, having for its object the general amelioration of the condition of the Persian Zoroastrians. Other resolutions were passed at the meeting relating to the nomination of a managing committee for preparing memorials to the various authorities concerned, and to the collection of subscriptions for carrying out the various purposes of the fund, such as the completion of a tower of silence at Yezd, the procuring of a partial or total remission of the "jazia," the affording of pecuniary relief to the aged and destitute, the creating of facilities for the education of the young, and the repairing and preservation of dilapidated places of worship in the parent-country. Of these resolutions none

was felt to be more important than the one emphasising the necessity of abolishing the "jazia," the imposition and attendant circumstances of which caused most of the misery to which the Persian Zoroastrians were exposed, and in the levying of which manifold evils were inflicted by the local officers. Involuntary apostasy to Mahomedanism and the too frequent exaction of amounts far in excess of the actual dues were the more serious of the evils towards the extirpation of which the managing committee of the fund, and notably their agent in Persia, had from the first devoted their energies. Nothing could surpass the zeal, courage, and persistency displayed by Mr. Manakji Antaria in his endeavour to procure partial or total relief from this cruel exaction; and it is not too much to say that, but for his unceasing efforts in so noble a cause, the obnoxious and extortionate "jazia" would still have been in existence, instead of having become a thing of the past. The efforts for its abolition lasted from the middle of 1857 until nearly the close of 1882. In the autumn of the latter year the "jazia" was abolished, to the unspeakable joy of those who suffered from it and of those who had agitated for its abolition. This glorious result was not, however, accomplished without the greatest discretion and the most determined and unflagging zeal being exercised on behalf of the sufferers. Much pressure was used; but this would have failed if it had not

been backed up by a system of indefatigable memorialising. On one occasion the Shah was personally interviewed by Mr. Manakji Antaria, under the auspices of Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, British ambassador at the Court of Teheran, when the skilful agent introduced the subject with so much tact and good sense that His Majesty's heart was moved to sympathy, and he ordered a reduction of one hundred tomans from a total claim of nine hundred and twenty tomans, the joint contribution annually wrung from the populations of Yezd and Kerman. Another and still more memorable interview with His Persian Majesty took place during his visit to England in 1873, when the managing committee, ever on the alert, drew up a memorial to him, adorned with gold leaf and inscribed in golden letters, in which were set forth in the most flowery and choicest Persian phrases the poverty and sufferings of their unhappy co-religionists in his country, owing to the "jazia" being still in force, and winding up with the prayer that His Majesty would extend his mercy by abolishing the tax "by way of a propitiatory offering designed to ward off evil from his most royal person." This memorial, together with one from the Parsis then resident in England, was presented to the Shah at Buckingham Palace, on the 24th of June 1873, by Messrs. Naorozji Fardunji, Dadabhai Naorozji, Ardeshir Kharshedji Wadia, and Dr. Rastamji Kavasji Bahad-

urji, who, being then in London, were deputed to do so by the Bombay committee. It should be added that the exertions of the Parsis in London were powerfully supported by the hearty co-operation of two distinguished and generous-minded English officers, viz. Sir Henry Rawlinson and Mr. E. B. Eastwick, M.P., who had both been at a previous period prominent representatives of the British Embassy at the Court of Teheran.[1]

The efforts of these distinguished Englishmen were not without some effect upon His Majesty, who was pleased to send the following gracious and gratifying reply to the gentleman who headed

[1] We give the letters of Mr. Eastwick and Sir Henry Rawlinson as instances of the great interest they evinced in the welfare of the Zoroastrians of Persia :—

"88 HOLLAND ROAD, 27*th June* 1873.

"MY DEAR SIR—I am going to the Grand Vazir this morning, and will call his particular attention to the address, and also point out how much it is for the interests of Persia that an enterprising people like the Parsis should be encouraged.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) "EDWARD EASTWICK.

"Dadabhai Naorozji, Esq., 15 Salisbury Street, Strand."

"7*th July* 1873.

"DEAR SIR—I took an opportunity of mentioning to the Shah the very depressed condition of the Zoroastrians in Persia, and explained to him how highly any measures he might initiate for ameliorating their state would be appreciated by their co-religionists in Bombay. His Majesty said the matter should receive his best attention when he returned to Persia ; and I thus hope that some real good will result from the Bombay memorial.—Yours truly,

(Signed) "H. RAWLINSON.

"To Dadabhai Naorozji, Esq."

the Parsi deputation for the presentation of the memorial :—

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *5th July* 1873.

"I am commanded by His Majesty the Shah to acknowledge the receipt of your memorials, praying for the application of measures which are calculated to improve the condition of the Zoroastrians in Persia.

"His Majesty will give this subject his best attention on his return to Persia, and if he finds that your co-religionists are subject to any undue severities, he will take care that redress is afforded them.

"His Majesty is aware of the high character which is borne by the Parsi community both in England and India, and he is glad that he numbers among his own subjects so many members of that enterprising and loyal race.

"His Majesty is gratified by the expression of your good wishes in regard to him.

(Signed) "MALCOLM.

"To NAOROZJI FARDUNJI, Esq.,
15 Salisbury Street, Strand."

But in all Eastern countries it requires a long time to eradicate abuses which have existed for centuries. The Parsis, therefore, seeing that nothing had been gained though much time had elapsed since the receipt of the above reply, and encouraged by the promise of His Majesty to redress the wrongs of his Zoroastrian subjects, persistently forwarded further representations to the Persian court. They also addressed an appeal to the British ambassador at Teheran through the Political Department of the Government of Bombay and the Calcutta Foreign Office, whose secretary, Sir Alfred Lyall, being then on a visit to Bombay,

kindly lent material aid in transmitting it to the Embassy and thence to the Shah. The grievances complained of were these: that the Persian Zoroastrians were liable to forcible conversion by the Mahomedans; that property belonging to a Zoroastrian family was confiscated wholesale for the use and benefit of individual proselytes and their perverted descendants, notwithstanding the existence and prior claims of lawful heirs; that property newly purchased was liable to be taxed for the benefit of the "mullas" to the extent of a fifth of its value; that new houses were forbidden to be erected and old ones to be repaired; that persons of the Zoroastrian persuasion were not allowed the use of new or white clothes; that they were prevented from riding on horseback; and that such of them as were engaged in trade were subjected to extortionate demands under pretence of enforcing Government custom dues. The appeal was favourably received, and the petitioners were assured that measures for the immediate relief of the sufferers, with one exception, that of the "jazia," would be immediately adopted and enforced. This reply did not realise all the expectations of the Parsis, who rightly felt that so long as the "jazia" existed it would leave the door open for all sorts of enormities; and they therefore persevered in their efforts to procure its total and permanent extinction. His Majesty the Shah was thanked through the British ambassador

for his kind and gracious reply, but the important question still continued to be agitated, and, as it happily turned out, not without success. The petition of May 1882, containing a prayer to His Majesty for its abolition, met with the desired result, and the "jazia" was declared to be finally doomed. A communication to that effect, dated 27th September 1882, was received by Mr. Dinsha Manakji Petit, president of the Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund Committee, from Mr. Ronald Thomson of the British Embassy. With Mr. Thomson's letter was also transmitted a copy of the royal firman in Persian, decreeing the immediate abolition of the impost, together with an English translation executed by the translator to the Embassy. We give below the British ambassador's letter conveying this welcome announcement, and the royal firman which promulgated the same glad tidings.

"TEHERAN, *September 27th*, 1882.

"SIR—With reference to the letter addressed to me by the Committee of the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund on the 8th of September 1881, I have much pleasure in transmitting to you herewith copy and translation of a firman which has been issued by the Shah wholly abolishing the "jazia" tax, and relieving the Zoroastrian community from its payment from the commencement of the present year the 21st of March 1882.—I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

(Signed) "RONALD F. THOMSON.

"The President of the Committee,
Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund."

ROYAL FIRMAN issued by HIS MAJESTY NASAREDIN SHAH relieving the Zoroastrians of Persia from the payment of the tribute annually levied from them under the name of Jazia.

"In consideration of the many favours and blessings which it has pleased the Almighty to confer upon us, and also as a thanksgiving to Him who has bestowed on us the Royal Crown of Persia, and has granted us the means of affording relief to its inhabitants, it behoves us to provide for the ease and comfort of all our subjects, of whatever tribe, race, community, or creed, in order that they may be strengthened and refreshed by the waters of our special favour.

"Amongst these are the Zoroastrians, residing at Yezd and Kerman, who are the descendants of the ancient population and nobles of Persia, and whose peace and comfort it is our Royal desire now to render more complete than heretofore.

"Therefore, by the issue of this Royal firman, we order and command that the same taxes, assessments, revenues, and all other Government imposts, trading dues, etc., which are taken from our Mahomedan subjects residing in the towns and villages of Yezd and Kerman, shall be taken in like manner from the Zoroastrians who also reside there, and nothing more nor less. And whereas in consideration of this arrangement the exaction of the sum of eight hundred and forty-five tomans (845) which was annually levied under another's name from the said community will be abolished. Therefore from beginning of the present auspicious year of the Horse we remit this sum, and absolve the Zoroastrians from its payment henceforward and for ever; and now we hereby order and command our Mustaufis and revenue officers of the Royal Exchequer to strike out the said sum entirely from the revenue returns of Yezd and Kerman.

"The present and future Governors of these provinces are to consider the claim for the payment of this tribute as now surrendered for ever; and during the present year, and hereafter, should this sum or a part thereof be exacted, they will be held responsible and punished; and in levying the tithes and assessments on water and landed property, all the trading dues, etc.,

the Zoroastrians must be dealt with in the same manner as our other subjects are treated.

"Given at Teheran in the month of Ramzan, 1299 (August, 1882).—Translated by

(Signed) "J. IBRAHIM."

Such was the happy issue of a long-sustained and well-fought battle by the Parsis of Bombay against this grievous and obnoxious impost on behalf of a remote and obscure, albeit kindred, community. No one who reflects on their complete disinterestedness as well as their unflagging persistency can help being impressed with the conviction that their action throughout was highly laudable, and calculated to shed no common lustre on the records of Bombay philanthropy. During a period of twenty-three years the managers of the Persian Amelioration Fund had spent about Rs.109,564 in contributions towards the payment of the "jazia." The major portion of this sum had been subscribed by local munificence, as the Zoroastrians of Yezd and Kerman were never in a position to pay for themselves without such assistance, so that when the royal firman was promulgated in 1882 loud were the praises of the Parsis, both in India and the mother-country. The present Shah is the first of the Persian monarchs, after a lapse of thirteen centuries, to show clemency and justice towards the children of the original Persians by putting them on a footing of equality with his other subjects. The name of Nasaredin Shah will

ever be remembered with gratitude by the Parsis, who will unceasingly pray for his long life and reign, and may this tend to the welfare and happiness of the Persian Zoroastrians. The Parsis are no less grateful to the Grand Vazir and other high functionaries of the state who are understood to have supported the cause of the Zoroastrians before their august master. To Mr. Ronald F. Thomson, the British ambassador at the Court of Persia, the Parsis owe a deep debt of gratitude for the admirable tact and judgment with which he pleaded for the relief of the distressed Zoroastrians, and for having succeeded in obtaining the redress which had been so long sought for in vain. The Parsi community is also indebted to its old friend, Sir George Birdwood, for the services he rendered in connection with this object, as was expressed at the time in a letter of thanks from the committee at Bombay. "Long live Nasar-edin Shah!" was the cry of every Zoroastrian in Persia and India after the promulgation of the firman, which might be appropriately called the Magna Charta of the Zoroastrians of Persia, by which the rights of justice have been secured for them in common with all the other subjects of the Persian monarchy.

It should be remembered that the abolition of the "jazia" was not the only undertaking to which the Bombay committee and their representatives abroad

had devoted their attention and energy. Theirs was a comprehensive scheme of philanthropy, tending to the general amelioration of the ill-used community in Persia, and in the practical realisation of which they were not one whit less zealous than in framing and forwarding memorials praying for the redress of a specific grievance. It must be added that they had found in Mr. Manakji Antaria an apt and willing agent for giving effect to their generous aims. Schools began to be established for the education of Zoroastrian children in 1857, from which date an annual contribution of Rs.600 was made for maintaining scholastic institutions at eleven towns in the districts of Yezd and Kerman. A donation of Rs.500 per annum from the trustees of the Nasarvanji Mancherji Kama fund, enhanced by further pecuniary aid from Mr. Palanji Nasarvanji Patel, a gentleman engaged in the China trade, induced the committee, later on, to concentrate their efforts and apply all their resources to placing the boarding school, opened in 1866, on a footing of greater efficiency. This boarding school originated in the munificent gift of Rs.25,000, given in 1864 by Mr. Nasarvanji Manakji Petit on the occasion of his son Jamshedji being invested with the "sudra-kusti." This amount was devoted from the first to the instruction, board, and lodging of thirty-one boys. Unfortunately the outlay required for the maintenance of this institu-

tion proved too heavy for the committee's resources, and the deficiency of income had for a time to be made up by transferring the general school funds to the boarding school account. It had, however, to be finally closed in March 1876, after an existence of ten years, and no attempt has, up to the present time, been made for its resuscitation.

Another direction in which the committee laboured for the welfare of their destitute and helpless brethren in Persia was in getting the daughters of poor parents or orphan girls of marriageable age settled in life, which their extreme poverty would otherwise have precluded. Such children were exposed to the serious danger of being perverted to Mahomedanism, and it is gratifying to add that, through the kind-hearted liberality of many Parsi gentlemen and ladies of Bombay, their agent in Persia was enabled, between 1856 and 1865, to obtain resources sufficient to cover the expenses of the marriage of upwards of a hundred girls, who were thus saved from the dangers and temptations to which poverty exposed them in the midst of a licentious and truculent Mahomedan population. Amongst the contributors to this worthy object, the names of Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai, Mr. Manakji Nasarvanji Petit, Mr. Mervanji Framji Panday and his wife Bai Hirabai, Mr. Mancherji Hormasji Kama, and Mr. Rastamji Jamshedji Jijibhai, deserve honourable mention.

The need of a charitable dispensary having been long felt in Persia, a subscription was set on foot which resulted in the collection of Rs.6,946. The amount, however, was insufficient for the purpose, and was therefore appropriated to the erection of a poorhouse in Teheran, which, besides furnishing, in ordinary times, the destitute poor with food and lodging, afforded relief and shelter to the victims of starvation, who took refuge there during the dreadful and desolating famine of 1862.

It only now remains to briefly notice charitable works of another kind, which, if not of equal importance, have been carried out by the benevolent efforts of the Zoroastrians of Bombay, at two of the localities rendered sacred by popular tradition and as enshrining memories of the last days of the old Persian rule. One of these legends, which has obtained general credence, relates to Khatun Banu, the daughter of Yazdezard, the last of the Persian monarchs. After the overthrow of the Persian empire the family of Yazdezard, unable to take shelter in Madayn, escaped with their lives and sought a safer refuge in the fortress of Haft-Ajar, the home of their ancestors. As the victors, however, were in hot pursuit and their numbers were overwhelming, the attempt proved futile, and the fugitives were scattered in various directions. One daughter, Meher Banu, sought and obtained relief in the stronghold of Gorab; another, Khatun Banu, to

whom the legend relates, directed her flight to a more distant retreat. Overcome by thirst on her way thither she applied for a drink of water to a "burzigar" or farmer, who was occupied in tilling the soil. He was unable to give it, but offered her milk instead from his cow. This was thankfully accepted, but, unfortunately, just as he had finished milking the animal, it kicked the basin, which, being an earthen vessel, was dashed to pieces. The milk was, of course, lost, and the unhappy Khatun was deprived of the only remaining hope of being able to wet her parched lips. Proceeding thence with her attendants to a secluded spot among the hills, a mile or two away from the scene of her disappointment, she flung herself down in despair, and besought the Almighty to shield her from harm, and either to stop the pursuit of her ruthless foes or to screen her from mortal eye. Scarcely had this prayer been breathed when a deep chasm opened on the hillside, and into it she descended and vanished for ever from human sight, its mouth miraculously closing over her. Meanwhile the "burzigar," who had gone in search of water, traced her retreat, but to his astonishment found on his arrival the band of attendants in deep mourning bewailing the loss of their princess. He was still further amazed when told of the manner of her disappearance. In a fit of grief and anger he rushed home and brought the cow which had spilt the milk

he had intended for the princess to the spot where the chasm had opened, and sacrificed her in expiation of her offence. As the news spread, his co-religionists, fired with the same emotion and grieved at the sad fate of Khatun Banu, made similar sacrifices, and the practice continued for many years afterwards. This place was named Dari-din (the door of faith), and thousands of Parsi pilgrims periodically crowded thither from the remotest corners of the empire to pay their homage.

The spot commemorating this mysterious disappearance was in Akda, a town or hamlet in the vicinity of Yezd. The annual slaughtering of cows at this place being repugnant to the feelings of the Bombay Parsis, one of the first measures which Mr. Manakji adopted was to put a stop to this practice. He substituted in place of it the performance of more legitimate observances prescribed in the Zoroastrian code of belief. His directions appear to have been willingly obeyed, and the barbarous practice of cow-killing was permanently abandoned. Anxious, however, that the commemoration of so touching and interesting a tradition should be encouraged and perpetuated, Mr. Manakji caused a dome of great size, together with cooking places, to be erected at the expense of the late Mr. Mervanji Framji Panday of Bombay, who also built extensive masonry squares for the accommodation of the large number of pilgrims who assemble there at each celebration.

The other legend referred to Hyat Banu, another of Yazdezard's daughters, who was believed to have likewise vanished from mortal sight at a place called Koh-i-Chakmaku, not far from Yezd. Here was a reservoir of considerable size, which received a large supply of water from the numerous adjoining rills. This, together with the wall that surrounded it, having got into a dilapidated condition through long neglect, was repaired, at the expense of Mr. Mervanji Framji Panday, the same liberal gentleman who provided the funds for the erection of the buildings at Akda. In several other directions the charity and philanthropy of the Bombay Zoroastrians have been extended, but we refrain from filling these pages with matters of minor importance.

After the statement of these instances it will be admitted that no more striking illustration need be adduced of the deep-seated feeling of sympathy with which the Zoroastrians regard their co-religionists in every clime, and the bond of union that connects them together. Separated by distance and the dissociation of centuries, widely differing in language, customs, and habits, the exiles in India have, nevertheless, always cherished and acknowledged a strong fellow-feeling with their brethren in Persia, to whom they have ever extended their sympathy and generous assistance.

It now only remains for us to record that these

happy results have been secured through the indefatigable zeal and disinterested exertions of the late Mr. Manakji Nasarvanji Petit, Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel, the late Mr. Mervanji Framji Panday, Mr. Dinsha Manakji Petit, and Mr. Kharshedji Nasarvanji Kama, the first four of whom were successively presidents of the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Society, and the fifth has been honorary treasurer from the formation of the association up to this day.

We are inclined to hope that the account we have attempted to give here of the remnant of the ancient Persian race, who have remained true to the religion of their fathers, and have continued on Persian soil, will not be without interest to the general reader. The instability of human grandeur receives no more striking illustration than is afforded by the overthrow of the great monarchies which ruled in Asia before the Christian era. Inheritor of the old glories of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, the Persian power spread its dominion from the isles of Greece to the tableland of Thibet,—from the Caspian Sea to the confines of India. The ruins of ancient Persepolis tell of the splendour and the power of the Persian princes. The remains of mighty causeways, cut step by step on the Bakhtyari mountains, which divide the valley of the Tigris from the plains of Isfahan, and form the natural defence on that side of the modern Moslem empire of Persia, speak of the

passage of myriads of busy feet and the march of heavy bodies of soldiery in ancient times, where now even the caravan dare not pass, and the wild robbers of the hills gain a precarious subsistence by plundering the plains, or by tending cattle, which form their sole source of wealth. In short, here is a country, once the most powerful, groaning under fanatical and despotic rulers, while the few descendants of the ancient race that created its glory are sunk into utter insignificance. We again say that the history of no other race more forcibly reminds us of the instability of human grandeur. To a Parsi, however, the decline and fall of the old Persian empire are and must always be a subject of peculiar interest. That strong feeling of association which binds to the present the memory of the last stages of a man's private existence,—that same feeling recalls vividly to our minds the memory of what our forefathers were. Our race in India enjoys, under the English rule, all the blessings of an enlightened and liberal government; and our only wish is that our brethren on Persian soil may yet be as happy and as fortunate as we are ourselves.

CHAPTER III.

THE ZOROASTRIANS IN INDIA—THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

The numbers of the Parsis—Small proportion of population—Their divisions—Foreign colonies—Rumours about other settlements—Sir Alexander Burnes quoted—Observations based on the last census—Growth of population—Low mortality—High average of children—Great weight of children—Statistical comparisons—Parsi occupations—Their indifference to agriculture—Sir Richard Temple's exhortation—A laudable example—Not a single Parsi soldier—Reasons for this, and regret at it—Parsi volunteers—Parsis fond of active exercises—Desirability of some Parsis entering the army—The two sects of the Parsis—The Shehenshais and the Kadmis—The sole point at issue between them—A question of dates—The Kabisa—History of the dispute—Satisfactory conclusion—Differences of pronunciation—The Parsi dress—Changes in costume—Parsi ladies and gentlemen—Children—Their mode of life—Partiality for jewellery—Improved residences—Parsi entertainments—Liberty of the women—Domestic felicity—The division of the Zoroastrian month—The auspiciousness of each day—List of these days—The great Parsi festivals.

THE numerical strength of the Parsis in India, according to the census taken by order of the Government of India on the night of the 17th of February 1881, was 85,397,—a number which must be considered extremely insignificant in proportion to the whole population of India, being no more than one Parsi to every 2,973 persons. The total population of India amounted to 253,891,821. By

far the largest number of Parsis are to be found in Western India. But even there the number is exceedingly small relatively to the total population of the Presidency of Bombay. The Parsis only number 82,091, out of 16,454,414, being one Parsi to every 200 persons. In the city of Bombay, the capital of the Western Presidency of India, where the Parsi population is the largest, viz. 48,597, its number is still very small when compared with the other principal races, the Hindus and Mussulmans, the number of the former being 502,857, and of the latter 158,696, the total of the whole population of all the races being 723,196.

Of the total Parsi population of 85,397 in India, 43,598 are males and 41,799 females. The Parsis have settled in China and other remote places out of India, for purposes of trade, but these outlying settlements do not contain more than 3,000 people. Adding these to the Parsi population in India, it gives a total, in round numbers, of about 88,000. To this must be added about 8,000 in Persia. The number of persons professing at the present day the ancient Zoroastrian faith may therefore be estimated at the approximate figure of 100,000.

Out of the total number of 85,397 Parsis in India, 82,091, as shown above, are in the Western Presidency alone. The rest, 3,306, are spread over the other parts of India. Of those in the Western

Presidency, 48,597, or more than half, reside in the city of Bombay, 6,227 in Surat, and 2,088 in Broach. The remainder are divided between different towns of Gujarat and other places in the Presidency. Rather more than 10,000 out of the total Parsi population in India of 85,397 inhabit the territories of native states,—the bulk of them being in the territories of His Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda. The town of Navsari, one of the earliest of the Parsi colonies, and still the headquarters of the Parsi priesthood, is perhaps the most important of the settlements outside British jurisdiction.

Forty-four years ago a Mahomedan traveller tried to dupe the Parsi community of Bombay by spreading reports of the alleged existence of a large and flourishing colony of Zoroastrians at Khoten, a country lying to the south-eastward of Kashgar, under the rule of a sovereign belonging to their own ancient race. But the reply made by the late lamented Sir Alexander Burnes to a communication from Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, dissipated the illusion. In his letter Sir Alexander said :—

"I ought to have replied to your letter of November the 19th before this, but I wished to make particular inquiries regarding the singular statements made by the Syud in Bombay, that a tribe of Parsis ruled by their own kings, and guided by the ancient customs of Zoroaster, reside in Khoten. I have now no hesitation in telling you that I believe the whole story from first to last to be a fabrication, and in this I am joined by Major Rawlinson, who is a highly competent judge of such matters. I

imagine that the Syud, seeing the flourishing condition of your noble race in Bombay, thought that, by ministering to human vanity, he might draw on your purses. The country of Khoten is by no means the *terra incognita* this man represents. I have seen several men who have been there. It is a dependency of China, and chiefly inhabited by Mahomedans subject to that empire, the only Chinese in it being the garrison and governor. In the accounts given to me of Khoten and the adjoining countries, the only difficulties which I experience are in finding out who the Christian merchants are who frequent these marts. They may be Russians, but I rather suspect Nestorian Christians."

Nor can any weight be attached to the report that the tribe of the Shiaposh Kafirs inhabiting the country to the north-east of Kabul are descendants of the same race. They worship idols, and their language and traditions have little resemblance to those of the ancient Zoroastrian race.[1]

[1] Sir Alexander Burnes, in his interesting narrative of a journey to Kabul, 1842, says :—

"But by far the most singular of all the visitors to the Kafir country of whom I have heard was an individual who went into it from Kabul about the year 1829. He arrived from Kandahar, and gave himself out to be a Guebre, or fire-worshipper, and an Ibrahumi, or follower of Abraham, from Persia, who had come to examine the Kafir country, where he expected to find traces of his ancestors. He associated, whilst in Kabul, with the Armenians, and called himself Sheryar, which is a name current among the Parsis of these days. His host used every argument to dissuade him from going on such a dangerous journey, but in vain ; and he proceeded to Jalalabad and Lughman, where he left his property, and entered the Kafir country as a mendicant by way of Nujjeet, and was absent for some months. On his return, after quitting Kafiristan, he was barbarously murdered by the neighbouring Huzaras of the Ali Purast tribe, whose Malik, Usman, was so incensed at his countrymen's conduct, that he exacted a fine of 2000 rupees as the price of his blood. All these facts were communicated to me by the Armenians in Kabul ; but whether poor

The few following observations on the Parsi population are based upon the last census report of the city of Bombay, where the bulk of the Parsis dwell. This census, carried out under the direction and superintendence of Dr. T. S. Weir, the able and energetic health officer of the city of Bombay, is, so far as can be tested, found to be very reliable and correct.

An impression existed in the years following the share mania and financial excitement of 1865 in Bombay that the Parsi population was not increasing. The census of 1881 has dispelled that delusion, and confirmed the evidence of the mortuary statistics, which show that the Parsi population possesses a vitality and energy inherited from their ancient ancestors the Persians, and equal to those of European populations living in more bracing climates than India. Between 1872 and 1881 the Parsi population increased from 44,091 to 48,597, or about ten per cent. This increase is due to the ordinary expansion and growth of the people. But the Parsi population is enterprising, and perhaps more

Sheryar was a Bombay Parsi or a Persian Guebre I could not discover, though I am disposed to believe him to have been the latter, as he carried along with him a "rucum" or document from the Shah of Persia. The death of this successful sojourner among the Kafir tribes is a subject of deep regret; but it holds out a hope that some one may follow the adventurous example of this disciple of Zoroaster, and yet visit the Kafirs in their native glens. I know not what could have given rise to an identification of the Kafir race with that of ancient Persia, unless it be the mode of disposing of their dead on hills without interment."

daring in entering on new fields of occupation than any other race in Bombay with the exception of Europeans, and therefore a considerable number seek adventurous fortunes in many distant countries. Were this not the case the increase of the population would be seen to have been far greater than is shown by the census returns of Bombay alone.

The low average mortality for some years of the Parsi population indicates the material prosperity of their condition, and the attention paid to the comfort and cleanliness of their homes. So much is this the case that it would almost appear as if the excellent sanitary precautions of the Zoroastrian prophet were being indirectly and unwittingly followed. The highest proportion of children in any class in Bombay under one year of age is found in the Parsi population. Among them children under one year of age have increased from 1,177 in 1872 to 1,989 in 1881.

A large proportion of children and a small death-rate are by universal admission the surest evidences of the vitality of any race. From an examination of the mortuary returns of Bombay we also find that the Parsi population is distinguished by the lowest mortality.[1]

[1] The average death-rate of two years (1881 and 1882) per thousand of the population among the several races was as follows :—Jains, 54·47 ; Brahmans, 20·4 ; Lingaets, 35·98 ; Bhattias, 29·94 ; Hindus of other castes, 26·11 ; Hindu low castes, 33·6 ; Mussulmans, 30·46 ; Europeans, 20·18 ; Parsis, 19·26.

The great weight of Parsi children as compared with the development of children born of other races is also a further proof of the vitality of this race. It has attracted the attention of even medical authorities. The largest percentage of children under one year of age in each class of the population of Bombay is among the Parsis.[1]

We have already referred to the large survival of infants as evidence of the high state of civilisation among the Parsi people. The proportion of children to full-grown women found in 1881 in each race also indicated greater vitality and greater care of infant life in the Parsi population than among any other class in Bombay. It will be of interest to know the proportion of children to full-grown women in each race. The percentage of children under two years of age to women of the ages between fifteen and forty-five, according to the census report of 1881, was among Hindu of other castes, 22·24; Hindu low castes, 24·60; Mussulman, 24·9; Jew, 25·19; Eurasian, 29·95; European, 33·69; Parsi, 30·27.

The proportion of males to females in 1881 among the Parsis was 108 to 100, but the balance of the sexes was more equal than in 1872. In the indigenous popula-

[1] Jain, 1·83; Brahman, 2·51; Lingaet, 2·23; Bhattia, 2·7; Hindus of other castes, 2·79; Hindu low castes, 3·54; Mussulman, 3·03; Negro-African, 1·16; Jew, 3·44; Native Christian and Goanese, 2·49; Eurasian, 3·77; European, 3·12; Buddhist, ·59; Parsi, 4·09.

tion the numbers of the sexes were still more equal, the proportion of males to females being 102 to 100.

As we have said before, the bulk of the Parsi population dwells in the city of Bombay; and we find, moreover, that the Parsi population is more essentially native to Bombay than any other class in that city can be said to be. According to the last census seventy per cent of the Zoroastrian population of Bombay were born within the city, while twenty-two per cent came from the old home in Surat, and the rest from other parts of India.

The Bombay census report of 1881 shows the occupations followed by the Parsis, and we draw from it the following particulars, which may be instructive. There were in that year 855 priests and persons officiating in religious buildings. The Parsis are well represented as the educators of youth—141 out of a total of 951 schoolmasters, and 34 out of a total of 165 ladies (60 being Europeans and 44 native Christians) were Parsis; 33 Zoroastrians returned themselves as civil engineers, the total number of civil engineers being 84. In business pursuits we find a much larger number of Parsis; 1,384 were enumerated as ordinary clerks, and 115 as office managers or as connected with offices. The early enterprise and capacity of the Parsi people in the industry of shipbuilding will be referred to in another chapter, and in the census we find that at the present day, out of 46

shipbuilders and boat-makers, 26 are Parsis. We are not surprised to find that the greater number of "dubashes" or ship compradores are Parsis, 146 out of the total of 159 "dubashes" enumerated being of that race. The largest number of machine manufacturers in any one class of the population of the city are Parsis; and it is also remarkable that the highest number of mechanical engineers and fitters of any single nationality is among the Parsis. The sedentary occupation of tailoring is not in favour with Parsi males, as only one is enumerated. Lastly, there were 6,618 male and 2,966 female mendicants in the city of Bombay; but of these only five male and one female were Parsis. We are still more proud to be able to record that not a single Parsi female returned herself as living on the wages of shame.

The Parsis have never taken to the meaner occupations, such as those of day-labourers, scavengers, palki-bearers, barbers, washermen, grooms, etc.

In the census report the occupations of the population of Bombay are collected and arranged into seven classes, and we find the Parsis classified as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
Professional	1,940	59
Domestic	2,079	416
Commercial	3,317	2
Agricultural and pastoral .	67	none
Industrial	3,610	87
Indefinite	565	139
Miscellaneous	13,737	22,579

It is very much to be regretted that the Parsis of the present day do not pay the attention to agricultural pursuits which their ancestors paid in their own country, and which the first settlers in India exhibited for several centuries. The Parsis to-day are not men of the country; they have become essentially men of the towns. At the commencement of the present century several well-known Parsis owned extensive farms, and spent large sums of money in the improvement of their estates; but unhappily these have passed completely out of their hands. When other avocations brought riches sooner the Parsis gave up their investments in lands. Perhaps they now regret having abandoned so sure, if slow, a source of individual profit.

When Sir Richard Temple, the late energetic Governor of Bombay, was at Navsari, he reminded the Parsis of the ancient traditions of their race in respect to agriculture, and, after quoting from the Vendidad some striking passages of great force and interest in respect to the estimation in which agriculture was held in those ancient days, that enlightened statesman exhorted the Parsis to again take up this homely pursuit. We are glad to say that some attention is being once more turned in this direction, and that Parsi capital is finding employment in the cultivation of land. A wealthy Parsi of Broach Mr. Rastamji Manakji has taken on lease a large extent of waste

land in the Panch Mahals, from the chief of Rajpipla, and has brought it under cultivation. He has already reaped the fruit of his industry and enterprise, as the land, which five years ago was barren, is now a fertile tract yielding cotton, wheat, and other products. It is to be hoped that Mr. Rastamji's example will be followed by other Parsis.

Not a single Parsi appears in the census returns as a soldier. It may perhaps strike the reader as curious that the Parsis, whose ancestors were remarkable for their martial spirit, have not embraced the profession of arms. The matter can be easily explained. We must, in the first place, observe that there is no objection whatever to a Parsi embracing the profession of a soldier on religious grounds, as has been erroneously supposed by some European writers. The veneration the Parsis have for fire has been the groundwork of this supposition, and in this belief it has been assumed that they would not fire a gun or a pistol. This representation is almost ridiculous. The Parsis hold fire in veneration, but only in a certain sense, as will be explained in the chapters on religion; but a legitimate reverence offers no impediment to their employing firearms as offensive or defensive weapons. When they were apprehensive on a recent occasion of disturbance in Bombay, the shops were promptly emptied of revolvers by Parsi purchasers. On the first volunteer movement taking form in Bombay, nearly

twenty-five years ago, the Parsis were allowed to join it, and several did so; but after a while the whole affair collapsed. When a fresh movement was made in the year 1877 it was confined to Europeans. Had it not been so the Parsis would have been very glad to join in the undertaking, there being no class of natives more eager to participate in the work of defending British interests than the Parsis. We are glad to note, also, that at some out-stations in India the Parsis have joined the volunteer ranks; and it is particularly gratifying to observe that quite recently the distinction of a commission of lieutenant in the volunteer corps at Quetta has been conferred on a respectable Parsi gentleman, Khan Saheb Dinsha Dosabhai Khambata of the Commissariat Department at that place.

One well-known Parsi gentleman, Mr. Dorabji Padamji, the son of Khan Bahadur Padamji Pestanji[1] of Poona, has gained great celebrity as one of the best shots in India. For years past, in all the rifle matches, he has scored the highest figures, and even in competition with military men has carried off some of the first prizes.

[1] Khan Bahadur Padamji Pestanji is the head of the Parsi community of Poona. During the mutinies his services as a mail contractor received the highest commendation of Government, and he was rewarded by the Government of India with the presentation of a gold medal and the title of Khan Bahadur. He was appointed by the Government of Sir Philip Wodehouse a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. He holds the rank of a first-class Sardar in the Deccan.

We must look for the real reason of the Parsis not becoming soldiers to the fact that very little or no inducement is offered to them to enlist in the army. The native (Hindu or Mahomedan) soldiers are paid seven rupees or fourteen shillings a month, inclusive of rations, while a Parsi, in the lowest employment that he can enter upon—namely, that of a cook or domestic servant—earns nearly double the sum which is paid to the sepoy. During the mutinies, when Bombay was denuded of European troops, many Parsis would willingly have enlisted in the army if the pay of European soldiers had been accorded to them. We have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the Parsis would be found to be as good and brave soldiers as the Anglo-Saxons, whilst their loyalty and attachment to the Government they are called upon to serve would always be above suspicion.

To the Parsis generally it is a matter of regret that pecuniary considerations have prevented their people from enlisting in the ranks of the native army. Their mode of life, even among the poorest, is more expensive than that of the Hindus or Mahomedans of the same class. The latter can live on seven rupees a month; with the former it would be impossible to do so. Seven or eight of a Hindu or Mahomedan family would, without much regard for decency, occupy and sleep in one room. The poorest Parsi would not so much as think of doing so. The poor Hindu or

Mahomedan wife would only require one or two saris a year for her covering as a dress, each not costing more than three rupees. As for the children, they go almost naked till they get to the age of ten. The poorest Parsi woman would want at least two silk saris a year, costing at least ten rupees each, besides trousers, shirts, shoes, etc., with proper covering for the children. How can a Parsi, then, become a soldier on seven rupees a month ?

If, however, a few Parsis could be induced to take service as soldiers, however poor the remuneration might be, a bright future would after a time open out for them. They would have the opportunity of proving what good soldiers they could make. We venture to predict that the State would also benefit by their service in the army. Educated, energetic, and consistently loyal, they would surely infuse a most wholesome spirit into any regiment. Some of them would soon rise to the position of non-commissioned officers, and when opportunities offered they would, by their coolness, courage, and discipline, show that they were not unworthy descendants of the men who at one time gained, by their heroic valour under their own kings, an empire from the Hellespont to the Indus. This much accomplished, it could not then be long before they would earn commissions in the army; for, if a German or a European of another nationality can secure a commis-

sion in the British army, why should not a Parsi, who is the born subject of the Queen-Empress? Only then would the Parsis feel themselves thoroughly identified with the British nation. But of course the Parsi must first show that the lapse of even many centuries has not detracted from his warlike spirit or courage. It is a fact not unknown in Bombay that during the riots some years ago a very small number of Parsis kept at bay a mob of about a thousand persons with no other weapons than bambu sticks, and thus prevented their gaining an entrance into the Parsi quarter.

The Parsis of India are divided into two sects, the Shehenshais and the Kadmis.[1] They do not differ on any point of faith, as the Protestants do from the Romanists, or the Romanists again from the Greek Church; nor does the distinction between them at all resemble that which divides the different castes of the Hindus, or the Shias and Sunnis among the Mahomedans. Their forms of worship and religious ceremony, as well as all the tenets of their religion, are the same in every respect. The cause of the division between the two sects is merely a difference as to the correct chronological date for the computation of the

[1] The name Shehenshai means "Imperial," and that of Kadmi is derived from *qadim*, "ancient," or *qadam*, (walking in) "the footstep," *i.e.* of one's ancestors. The Shehenshais are also called Rasmi, derived from *Rasm*, "custom"—that is, according to the custom obtaining in India.

era of Yazdezard, the last king of the ancient Persian monarchy. No such contention, it may be stated, exists among the Zoroastrians in their fatherland.

The Parsis reckon their year by three hundred and sixty-five days. Every month among the Parsis is a calendar month of thirty days, commencing with the month Fravardin and ending with Spendarmad. At the end of three hundred and sixty days, five days, which are named Gathas, are added, thus making three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. The five hours and fifty-four seconds are not taken into consideration in their reckoning, so, in order to accord with the correct solar year, the ancient Persians are reported to have, at the end of every one hundred and twenty years, made the "Kabisa" or intercalation, that is to say, added a month to the period. The Persian Zoroastrians, either from want of knowledge or mere forgetfulness, discontinued the Kabisa after they lost the sovereignty of their land, while the Parsis are reported to have once intercalated during their residence in Khorassan, and this fact has brought into existence the two sects, as will be explained hereafter.

In the year 1090 one Jamasp, a learned Zoroastrian from Persia, arrived at Surat to undertake the instruction of the "mobeds" or priests, and he was the first to discover that his co-religionists in India were a month behind their brethren of Iran in commencing

their new year; but no great importance at that time being attached to this circumstance, all went on as smoothly as before. However, in the year of Yazdezard 1114, or A.D. 1746, an Irani named Jamshid, together with a few "mobeds" or priests, introduced the date as observed by the Persian Zoroastrians and called themselves Kadmis. The bulk of the people, who became known as Shehenshais, stuck to their old date. However, as time went on, the adherents of Jamshid now and then gained a little accession to their number.

It will thus be seen that it was at Surat that the Parsis were first divided into two sects, and for some time the difference between them did not produce any bad feeling or untoward results. But eventually this harmony was disturbed by the appearance of a more bigoted leader in each party—Mancherji Kharshedji Seth among the Shehenshais, and Dhanjisha Manjisha among the Kadmis. They were both good men in their way, and commanded great influence at Surat, especially among their countrymen. Under their leadership this little storm in a teapot grew into a perfect tempest; hot discussions ensued, and much angry feeling was displayed on both sides. Dhanjisha Manjisha deputed, at his own expense, a learned priest of Broach, named Kavas Rustam Jalal[1] (father of the

[1] Mulla Kavas Rustam Jalal was born at Broach in the year 1733. After his return from Persia in 1780 he followed Dhanjisha to

well-known Mulla Firoz), to Persia to obtain any information calculated to advance the views of the sect he represented. Mulla Kavas was reputed to be an excellent Persian and Arabic scholar. To fulfil the object of his mission he lived in Persia and Turkey for twelve years, during which time he visited Yezd, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Constantinople. Having made all the necessary inquiries, he returned to Surat in the year 1780. While in Persia he had an audience with His Majesty the Shah Mahomed Karim Khan. A few months before the return of Mulla Kavas his patron Dhanjisha Manjisha came to Bombay, and laid there the foundation of the Kadmi sect, under the influence and auspices of Dadiseth, one of the most opulent and influential Parsis of the time. Mulla Kavas followed Dhanjisha to Bombay, and soon ingratiated himself with Dadiseth, who afterwards built an Atash-Behram, or the chief sacred fire-temple for the Kadmi Parsis, and appointed Mulla Kavas as their chief "dastur." The Kadmi sect, whose numbers had been very small, was much strengthened by this new

Bombay, and having made the acquaintance of the well-known Dadibhai Nasarvanji (the Dadiseth), he persuaded him to build a fire-temple in Bombay for the benefit of the Kadmis. Dadiseth agreed to this proposal, took up the matter in earnest, and the building was ready in 1783. It was consecrated by Mulla Kavas on the 29th September of that year. On the same date Mulla Kavas was appointed chief "dastur" of the Kadmi sect of the Parsis. In the following year, however, he resigned his sacred office, and went to Hydrabad in the Deccan, where he was much honoured and respected by the Nizam. He remained there till his death in 1802.

accession as well as by the establishment of a fire-temple. But beyond an occasional ebullition of temper everything went on smoothly between the two sects till fifty or sixty years ago, when Bombay became the theatre of a very hot discussion on the vexed question of the difference between the two dates.

The Kadmis computed their year fully one month in advance of the Shehenshais, and this can be best understood by the European reader when it is explained that whereas the new year of the Kadmis commences on the 19th of August that of the Shehenshais begins on the 19th of September. This celebrated discussion is known by every Parsi as the intercalation or "Kabisa" controversy. Mulla Firoz,[1] who

[1] Mulla Firoz succeeded his father as "dastur" or high priest of the Kadmis in 1802. He had acquired a great reputation as a scholar, besides being distinguished for his piety and irreproachable character. When eight years old his father took him to Persia, where he acquired a sound and scholarly knowledge of the Persian and Arabic languages. His original name was Peshotan, but he was afterwards named Firoz on account of his intelligence. He was the author of several works. In 1786 he wrote in Persian *Derich Kherde Manjumi*, containing a description of his and his father's travels. He was engaged by the Hon. Mr. Jonathan Duncan, then Governor of Bombay, to teach him the Persian language, and with Mr. Duncan's assistance he translated into English a good portion of the *Dassatir*. The governor, however, died before the completion of the translation, but Mulla Firoz asked Mr. William Erskine to complete it, and published it in the year 1819. Mulla Firoz's greatest work was the *George Nama*, a poem on the conquest of India by the English. Unfortunately, however, he died before its completion, which was undertaken and finished by his heir and successor Dastur Rastamji Kaikobadji, and dedicated to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

succeeded his father Mulla Kavas as chief priest, and another learned priest, Fardunji Marzbanji, who assisted him, were the two champions on behalf of the Kadmi sect, while the mass of the people, headed by a popular and influential member of the community, the late Kharshedji Manakji Shroff, and under the religious leadership of the pious, able, and learned chief "dastur" of the Shehenshais, Edalji Dorabji Sanjana,[1] represented the other side and supported the date observed by themselves ever since their arrival in India. Meetings were held to which learned Moguls residing in the city and others who could throw any light on the subject were invited, and many animated discussions took place over it. Newspapers and pamphlets were published to represent the views of the respective parties. The English local journals were also filled with correspondence on the subject, and a good deal of violent writing was indulged in by both sides. When arguments failed abuse was freely resorted to, and the outside mob showed a tendency to resort to sticks in order to effect a settlement of the question.

[1] Dastur Edalji Dorabji Sanjana was the head priest of the Shehenshai community. He was greatly admired for his piety and learning, and highly esteemed and respected for his amiable qualities and superior attainments. In his day he was considered the most learned Zend and Pehlevi scholar among the Parsis of Western India. He was not only thoroughly versed in the ancient languages of Persia, but was also well acquainted with Sanscrit. He was the author of several works on the Parsi religion.

The Shehenshais explained that the Zoroastrian religion acknowledged one month's intercalation at the end of every one hundred and twenty years, and that, after the fall of the Persian empire, there was one such intercalation while they lived as fugitives in Khorassan, but that when they arrived in India the practice had not been continued. Hence their date was one month behind that of the Kadmis. The Kadmis, on the other hand, maintained that intercalation was forbidden in the Zoroastrian calendar. They declared that it occurred in political calculations alone, and that, as a matter of fact, no such intercalation ever took place in Khorassan, as asserted by the Shehenshais.

With the light of recent knowledge thrown upon it, the question would seem to lie in a nutshell, and if the actors in the drama of the Kabisa controversy were to rise from their graves they would probably wonder how they could have spent so much time and money over so small a matter. Mr. Kharshedji Rastamji Kama, who is a Kadmi, and of whose studies of the Zoroastrian religion we have spoken in another place, has, in a work on the computation of the Yazdezardi era published in 1870, essayed to show that both the Shehenshais and the Kadmis were wrong in their respective contentions. The Kadmis were wrong in denying that the Parsi new year properly commenced on the 21st of March, for, with

the better knowledge at the present day of the Avesta language, as well as by the deciphering of Persian coins by European scholars, it has been ascertained that the Zoroastrian religion acknowledged intercalation. The Shehenshais were wrong in as much as since the fall of the Persian empire there had been no intercalation as was said to have been the case by their advocates. The assertion of the Kadmis, supported by the date current among the Zoroastrians in Persia at the present day, that no intercalation took place after the empire passed into the hands of the Mahomedan, is correct; but they were wrong in maintaining that intercalation is not enjoined by the Zoroastrian religion. It appears, therefore, that in the hot-headed "Kabisa" controversy both parties were in the wrong.

The Gahambars of the Parsis are festivals denoting the several seasons of the year, and if the Parsi year began on the day stated, viz. the 21st of March, the festivals would take place in the proper seasons instead of their recurring, as they do at present, out of their seasons, owing to the intercalation not having been enforced during the last thirteen hundred years. The fact is that there was no continuous era in Persia. Every king calculated his own era from the day of his accession to the throne, but with this provision, that if he ascended the throne before the 21st day of March—the commencement of the solar year—the first

year of his reign should be said to have ended on that day. Thus if a king was crowned on the 1st day of January, or on any other subsequent day before the 21st of March, the second year of his reign would be reckoned from the latter date. Yazdezard Sheryar ascended the throne on the first day of the Fravardin month, which corresponds with the 16th of June A.D. 632. The second year of his reign commenced according to practice on the 21st of March A.D. 633. But as a matter of fact the Parsi year commences at present, and has done so for as far back as memory goes, from Roz (day) Ahura Mazda, Mah (month) Fravardin, which corresponds with the 19th August of the Kadmis and the 19th September of the Shehenshais. If regular intercalations had taken place after Yazdezard up to the present day, it is computed that the Parsi new year would have corresponded with the solar year which commences on the 21st day of March, a day still celebrated with great pomp in Persia by both Mahomedans and Zoroastrians.[1]

This is a clear solution of the question which so much vexed the Parsis during the earlier part of the present century. The next question which suggests itself is, Why do not the Parsis of the present day do away with this difference? The answer is a simple one. The change would create so much confusion in the dates of old events and records that they

[1] See account of Jamshedi Naoroz in the notice of Parsi festivals.

prefer to do as they have hitherto done. This feeling is strengthened by there being an entire absence of discord between the Shehenshais and the Kadmis, and every probability that old passions will never be aroused again among them at least upon this subject.

It may be interesting, however, to recall some of the disputes which arose from the bad feeling between the Shehenshais and the Kadmis during the earlier and latter years of the "Kabisa" controversy. In 1782-83 the Parsis of Broach grew furious on the subject. They had recourse to violence rather than to argument. One Homaji Jamshedji was accused of kicking a pregnant woman, thereby causing miscarriage. He was sent to Bombay for trial in the Mayor's court, which at that time did some of the work of the High Court of the present day. Homaji was convicted of murder and sentenced to capital punishment. Several other persons who were engaged in the affair were also punished by imprisonment and fines. The latter amounted to Rs.3,900, and these were paid by the Kadmis.

The angry feelings engendered by the controversy continued to exist for some years. At Bombay the Shehenshais used to show their abhorrence of the Kadmis by applying many undeserved and opprobrious epithets to them. They called them *churigars*[1]

[1] *Churi* = bangles, *gar* = maker or dealer; hence a term denoting effeminacy.

and similar terms, and further insulted them by pretending to observe fast on their new year's day. The writer of these pages well remembers when he was a boy seeing a lazy bull wandering about the streets of Bombay, being teased by mischief-making Shehenshai boys, who shouted at him "Churigar." This irritated the brute as much as if a red rag had been shown him, and the boys, while running away from the onset of the animal, cried out: "Lo, the 'churigar' is angry; even the brute does not like being called a 'churigar.'"

When the strife was at its height a feeling of strong dislike had sprung up among them to give or take daughters in marriage from the one side to the other; but the Parsis, with their natural shrewdness, soon saw the stupidity and disadvantage of indulging their resentment in this form. When they found that their interests were affected by their prejudices they wisely gave ear to better counsels. There is consequently no bar at present to intermarriage between the two sects, and this has to a great extent been the means of obliterating all those party feelings which ran so high at the time of the "Kabisa" controversy. There are to-day in many families a Shehenshai husband and a Kadmi wife, or *vice versâ*, and the children of such parents invariably follow the sect to which their father belongs.

We have said before that there is no important

difference in the forms of worship or religious ceremonies of the Shehenshais and the Kadmis. The following minor exceptions may, however, be noticed. The vowel which the Shehenshais pronounce as *u* is pronounced by the Kadmis as *ee*. Thus, whilst the Kadmis would say "Ahee," the Shehenshais would say "Ahu," and so on. In the forms of prayers in Pazand there are slight differences, but they do not in any way affect the tenets of the religion professed by both sects. A Parsi when he prays has to recite the names of the month and day on which he offers his petition. The mention of the date, therefore, is the principal distinction between the prayers of a Kadmi and those of a Shehenshai.

The Shehenshai sect greatly outnumbers the Kadmi. Out of a total population of one hundred thousand souls the Kadmis are hardly ten or fifteen thousand. But the smallness of their number has been no hindrance to their gaining a prominent position in the community, or to their advancement in life. Within the last fifty years some of the most influential Parsis have belonged to this sect, and even at the present day it includes very distinguished men. The late Mr. Framji Kavasji, a most enlightened Parsi, belonged to it. In our own day this sect is represented by the highly-respected Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel; by the liberal, enterprising, and wealthy members of the Kama family; and by the Dadiseth family,

whose ancestors were known for their public spirit and generosity.

The more numerous class, the Shehenshais, is represented by Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai, Baronet, the wealthy and liberal Petits, and many other rich and respectable families.

All the festivals of the Parsis are observed by both sects in exactly the same manner, only on different dates.

We have now to describe the costume of the Parsis. The dress of the modern Parsis of India differs from that worn by their ancestors in Persia and by their present co-religionists in that country. They have adopted the present costume in accordance with their agreement with the Hindu princes who received them in India, and to this is attributable the great resemblance of the "angrakha" (coat) and turban of the men, and the "sari" of the women, to the dress of the Hindus of Gujarat. This costume is, moreover, well adapted to the climate of the country. Beginning with the child, we may mention that its dress, till it attains the age of seven (when it has to be invested with the "sudra" and "kusti," or the sacred shirt and girdle), is simple and not less becoming. It consists of a single garment—a loose shirt of cotton, flannel, or silk—called "jabhla," extending from the neck and reaching below the knees. Among the well-to-do classes, the habit of putting

on light trousers has been recently introduced. The "topi" or skull-cap covers the head, and light shoes protect the feet. The dress of both boy and girl up to the age of six or seven is the same, the girl being distinguished by her long hair and the ornaments on her person. When she is two or three years old both her ears are bored, and rings of thin gold wire are worn in them. On festival days, on their own birthdays, or on those of other members of the family, as well as on occasions of public gathering or rejoicing, both father and mother take more than ordinary pride and pleasure in dressing their children in the best of rich and embroidered silks of variegated colours, and decking them with gold and jewel ornaments. Thus attired, their smiling bright faces present, when driving out of doors, a most pleasing picture to the eye. The Parsi ladies of the present day are well known for their good taste in dress; and though they take particular pride in adorning their children as much as possible, yet the most fastidious critic would have difficulty in discovering anything in their dress and ornaments that was in bad taste.

The home costume of a Parsi consists of a long muslin shirt (sudra) and girdle (kusti), waistcoat of white cloth or chintz with sleeves, loose cotton trousers, slippers, and a China silk skull-cap. When going out he puts on, over the muslin shirt (or

waistcoat, according to his means), an "angrakha," or loose coat without a belt, the sleeves of which are twice the length of the arm, and consequently fold up in creases above the wrist. The growing fashion is, however, to make the sleeve exactly fit the arm, as will be seen from the illustration we give in this volume of a Parsi gentleman. The turban, which is generally of a dark chocolate colour, flowered fancifully, forms the outdoor covering of the head, and is placed over the skull-cap. Shoes or boots are worn on the feet.

The well-to-do wear silk trousers, socks, and English shoes or boots, and are fond of decorating their fingers with gold and diamond rings. The full dress of a Parsi consists, in addition to the above, of a "jama" and "pichori" of white linen. The "jama" is a long double-breasted coat, always made of cotton, the lower portion hanging in folds to the ankle, and resembling the gown of an English lady. The "pichori" is a long piece of cloth about a yard wide and several yards in length. It is folded together in bands, and passed round the waist as many times as its length will admit. This dress is only used at funeral and wedding parties, but some people wear it on state occasions, such as a ball or reception at Government House. A somewhat modified form of the English dress—that is to say, a coat and trousers —has been adopted by the great majority of the

Parsis of the present day, both on the ground of appearance and convenience. But they have not discarded the turban, although it is a cumbrous and inconvenient head-dress, not even affording protection against the sun. What may be called the *jeunesse doré* among the Parsis are inclined to go still further, and it is impossible to say what changes will be effected in the dress of the next generation.

The dress of the Kadmi sect of the Parsis does not differ from that of the Shehenshais. A few priests of the former wear a peculiar garb of their own in imitation of that used by their late high priest, Mulla Firoz, which in a great measure resembles the dress of an Armenian or a Turk. The Shehenshai priests generally adopt the same costume as laymen, with the one difference that it is made solely of white cotton cloth, including the turban.

In appearance the males do not compare unfavourably with the other natives of India. Some of those who adopt European dress might even be mistaken for Europeans if they happen to be fair skinned and well built. They have not yet lost the mien and stamina of their ancestors, though early marriages and marriages amongst near relations have tended to lower the original stature of the Parsis. The earlier Parsis of India were generally of more than medium height and of a brave bearing; but nowadays this is not so common as it was.

Parsi women are generally well formed, fair in complexion, and of a soft and pleasing countenance. They would look more handsome and appear to greater advantage if they could display their dark, shining and luxuriant hair. Though there is no religious injunction against keeping the head uncovered, the Parsis have imbibed the notion, supported by long usage, and originally imported from Persia itself, that it is sinful and contrary to religion to leave the head uncovered by either day or night; hence a male is never without his skull-cap or a female without her "mathabana," which is a thin cloth of white linen of the size of a small handkerchief. The Parsi woman is therefore prevented from displaying what is generally considered one of the most glorious natural adornments of her sex by being ludicrously, and almost barbarously, obliged to conceal her hair under the "mathabana." This has also come to be regarded as a token of feminine modesty. Considerable change has, however, taken place of late in the mode of putting the "mathabana" on the head. Half a century ago Parsi ladies would have scouted the idea of showing the hair above the forehead, as is done by the Parsi girls of the present period, who put the "mathabana" as far back as possible in order to bring into view the front portion of their head with well-parted hair. Their graceful appearance is now being emulated by ladies of more advanced age;

while elderly dames, still ostentatiously persisting in the old custom on the score of modesty, are twitted by their younger sisters as feeling compelled to do so for the purpose of hiding the gray hair which would betray their age.

Like the men, the women wear a shirt next to the skin and silk trousers, and tie the kusti round the waist over the shirt. Their "sari," or outer dress, is about six yards in length, and is generally of bright-coloured silk or satin—sometimes embroidered with fancy designs in silk or fringed with deep gold lace. The latter is used only on great occasions. This "sari" is first folded round the waist, covering the lower limbs, and the remainder is gracefully thrown over the head, from which it falls upon the right arm. Between the shirt and the "sari" they formerly used to wear a silk vest, with short sleeves, called the "kanchri" or "choli." This "kanchri" or "choli" has, however, been now almost entirely superseded by a bodice more after the English fashion, and sometimes made of very rich and costly materials. On the wrists are displayed glass, gold, or jewelled bangles, the latter being more generally worn on festive occasions. The glass bangles have always to be worn, and they denote that the lady is not a widow. In imitation of Hindu and Mahomedan women, the Parsi ladies were, until the last generation, in the habit of wearing a nose-ring.

A PARSI LADY.

This ornament was made of three pearls in a gold ring an inch in diameter, one of the pearls being a pendant supposed to fall gracefully upon the upper lip; but their good taste at last led them to abandon the barbarous practice of perforating the nose.

Parsi ladies possess jewellery worth from five hundred to twenty thousand pounds sterling. They generally wear slippers at home, and a good many of them still use them for outdoor purposes; but the practice of wearing boots and shoes now largely prevails. The slippers worn by Parsi ladies are undoubtedly a graceful mode of covering the feet. Lord Lytton, the late Viceroy and Governor-General of India, when presiding at an exhibition of a Parsi girls' school, expressed himself agreeably pleased with this particular item of their dress.

The Parsi mode of life may be described to be an eclectic *ensemble,* half-European and half-Hindu. As they advance every year in civilisation and enlightenment, they copy more closely English manners and modes of living. The Greek historians have remarked that of all nations the ancient Persians were most distinguished by their readiness in imitating foreign manners and customs. This peculiarity their descendants have retained to the present day. During their sojourn in Gujarat they willingly adopted the language, dress, and other social customs of that country, and they now have taken as

completely to European manners and customs. The educated and influential classes have already adopted in their domestic life the comforts, conveniences, elegancies, and, we may also add, the costliness, of the European style.

The domestic arrangements of their residences have also undergone of late a vast change. Their houses are generally built in good taste, upon well-conceived plans, and they are well ventilated. Their villas or garden-houses are some of the best in Bombay. The drawing-rooms are richly furnished and decorated, and the walls adorned with landscapes and historical pictures, while the particular boast of a Parsi is to have his house brilliantly lit up with lamps and chandeliers of all descriptions. The best private dwelling-house in Bombay is Petit Hall, which is owned by a Parsi gentleman, the highly-respected Mr. Dinsha Manakji Petit.

A great improvement has taken place among the Parsis in their mode of taking meals. Years ago they used, like the Hindus, to eat them squatting on the ground, and the viands were served to them in a brass dish, on which they were all spread out at the same time, a practice still in vogue among the poorer classes. The better classes have, for a long time past, adopted the table and chair with all the usual accompaniments of a European dinner. At large parties the table is spread out in the English fashion,

instead of as formerly, when hundreds sat in a line in rows upon an oblong sheet of cotton cloth laid upon the floor, each eating his food off a plantain leaf upon which it was laid out.

Even now, on occasions of large gathering such as take place on marriages or similar joyful occasions, when invitations are issued by hundreds, the guests eat in batches of two and three hundred at a time. At such large parties the primitive plantain leaves are brought into requisition, and a leaf of about sixteen or eighteen inches square is put on the table opposite each chair, and the attendants place the different viands upon it. When the first batch have finished their meal, the soiled leaves, with the remnants of the dinner, are removed, the table cleaned as dexterously as possible, and fresh plantain leaves and viands are placed upon it. This process is repeated until all the guests have been served. The host and his immediate relations and intimate friends dine with the last company at table.

Generally well-to-do Parsis take three meals a day. In the morning, after ablutions, they have, between seven and half-past, their breakfast, which consists of tea, bread and butter, and eggs. Between twelve and one lunch or tiffin is served, at which rice and curry, with mutton, vegetables, and fish, form the principal dishes. The poorer classes are, however, content with simple rice and "doll," a thick grain curry. Between

four and five in the afternoon a cup of tea is taken, and dinner, the most substantial meal of the day, is served about eight o'clock. It consists of fish, meat or poultry, eggs, vegetables, sweets, and fruit. It is a custom with them to acknowledge before and at the end of each meal, with grateful thanks, the kindness of Providence in providing them with their daily bread.

Up to recent times the men used to take their meals apart from the females. The male members of the family either supped together or separately, and the female members did the same. This custom was certainly derived from the Hindus, as the ancient Persians observed no such distinction. History fully proves that the ancestors of the Parsis not only dined with their mothers, wives, and sisters, but took their ladies out with them to feasts. At a dinner said to have been given by Amintus, King of Macedon, to the Persian ambassador at his court, the latter, in acknowledgment of a toast, is affirmed to have expressed his regret that no ladies were present, as was the custom in his own country, for without those fair companions the happiness of the company could not be said to be complete. Now, however, the practice of both males and females taking their meals together has come largely into vogue.

As a rule the Parsis are temperate in their habits. A glass or two of spirits or wine is all that most of

them indulge in at dinner, though, of course, at large parties various wines are handed round and pretty freely indulged in. During the day they abstain from drinking anything stronger than tea. They abhor drunkenness as the parent of many evils. As an instance of their esteem for temperate habits, it may be mentioned that, in the early part of this century, when the Panchayet was in power, it directed the removal of a liquor shop kept by a Parsi from a street inhabited by other Parsis on pain of excommunication. It will not be out of place to state here the fact that Parsis do not smoke either tobacco or opium, from their religious instinct forbidding them to bring fire, which is pure, into contact with the mouth, which is deemed impure.

The Parsi women occupy in their society a much more honourable and independent position than either their Hindu or Mahomedan sisters. According to Dr. Haug, a high authority on Zoroastrian scriptures, "the position of a female was in ancient times much higher than it is nowadays. They are always mentioned as a necessary part of the religious community. They have the same religious rites as men; the spirits of deceased women are invoked as well as those of men."

The Parsi generally makes a good and affectionate husband, and discharges faithfully his matrimonial duties, and the wife is equally conscious of her obliga-

tions towards her lord and master. Hence Parsi families generally lead a peaceful and happy life. The Parsi wife takes an active part in all domestic concerns untrammelled by the heavy shackles which usage and caste have imposed on Hindu and Mahomedan women. The Parsi ladies also employ themselves in making dresses for their children and themselves, which is a subject of unceasing interest to them as it is to women all over the world. Of late years they have taken to embroidery and every other kind of lady's work, in which they have not only made considerable progress but attained great proficiency. The females of the poorer classes are mostly engaged in the kitchen and in sewing either for domestic use or for other persons on payment. It must not be supposed, however, that ladies of the better classes do not attend to their more strictly household duties connected with the internal administration of the home.

A Parsi lady, when she rises in the morning, takes a bath, attends to her children, gives orders to the servants for the provision of the requisite meals for the day, and then attends to the wants of her husband, who by this time is either praying or reading his morning newspapers, in accordance with whatever may be his habit. After her husband has gone to his work and the children to their schools, she attends to her household duties, and engages in needlework with her daughters and daughters-in-law. At mid-

day they take their meals together, and the afternoon is passed in the same manner as the forenoon. Later in the afternoon the ladies, if provided with carriages, go out to visit their lady friends or for a drive.

The range of conversation among Parsi ladies of the old school, with very rare exceptions, was somewhat limited. It seldom rose above the ordinary tittle-tattle and gossip of women, and was confined chiefly to their dresses and the latest fashions and forthcoming betrothals and marriages. The most momentous questions of current war or politics stirred them but gently, and their criticism seldom went beyond the limits of innocent wonder. All this is happily changing, as Parsi ladies are now taking the lead in female education.

The highest ambition and the most earnest wish of a Parsi girl is to obtain a good husband. When that object has been attained her position is assured and her happiness may be considered complete. As a woman she is generally loving, cheerful, and fond of children. She is always to be seen with them grouped around her. In short, the mother is the soul of the family and the centre of all its happiness; without her the house would be a desert and life a burden. It is a feature of her mental progress, which is worth noticing, that the careful education of her children is a subject of great solicitude to her, for, while a few years ago the father was the sole superintendent of

his children's education, the mother now actively participates in all his cares and anxieties on the subject. She is even willing to stint herself in her household expenses to secure additional facilities for their tuition. Private tutors are now a common institution in Parsi families for both boys and girls.

Parsi women are not wanting in kindly offices towards their neighbours. On occasions of rejoicing they are the first to entertain, however slender may be their means. They are equally willing to be entertained in return. In distress and affliction too they always render mutual assistance. If a neighbour falls ill, the ladies of the next house are constantly with the family of the patient to afford all the help and consolation in their power. This commendable practice of being useful to one's neighbour has passed into a proverb, "Our neighbours are li[illegible]r fathers and mothers."

In former years Parsi ladies of th[illegible] upper and middle classes had, like the Mahomedans and Hindus, an objection to appear in public. They never joined the company of the men, nor did they venture to drive out in open carriages even by themselves. On occasions of public illumination or at fairs they would go out in closed carriages with venetians drawn, and peep through them like so many birds imprisoned in cages. This prejudice has now almost entirely worn away. Parsi ladies of all classes may be seen in public

just like the ladies of the Western world. They freely accompany their husbands and other male relatives, and walk and drive out with them as best suits their own tastes and habits without exciting any objection or remark. Thirty or forty years ago the ceremony of laying a foundation stone or the opening of any public institution would have been a mystery to Parsi ladies, but now there is no public occasion, whether it be the landing of a new governor or a viceroy, or of a prince or princess of the blood royal, or the opening of any public institution, at which Parsi ladies are not only conspicuous by their presence, but at which they do not also lend an additional charm and grace to the assembly by their comely faces and the elegant dresses of a variety of colours in which they array themselves.

Half a century ago Parsi ladies of the middle and better classes were seldom seen on foot, but in this also a great change has taken place in recent years. Since the reclamation of Back Bay in Bombay hundreds of the Parsi fair sex can be seen every evening promenading there and enjoying the pure sea-breeze.

A word now about the men. Parsi husbands in all conditions of life are generally kind to their wives. Cases of ill treatment are very rare indeed, and still more seldom brought before the police courts, as is only too common among the other races of the population. A little scolding and some rough treatment

were not unknown in the domestic circles of past generations of Parsis. In this they copied the other natives of the country, who considered such a mode of treatment no more than a wholesome discipline for the other sex. This has now become a thing of the past, and such conduct is considered both cowardly and unmanly.

As a race the Parsis are highly sociable, and they embrace every opportunity of visiting or entertaining their friends and relations. A religious festival or holiday, a birthday or a marriage, are the great occasions of their social enjoyment. As an indication of increasing intellectual taste among the Parsis, it may be noted that of late English music has formed one of the amusements of their evening parties, instead of the ugly and absurd "natches" of native dancing girls, accompanied by musicians who were far from being great masters of their profession, but who grinned, nodded, and made horrible faces in their excitement, with a view to delude the audience into the belief that they were absorbed in the spirit of their art! The natch, however, is not entirely superseded.

Each day of the Zoroastrian month of thirty days has its name. In the fourth century of the Christian era there flourished in Persia a "dastur" who was reputed to be very wise. His name was Adarbad Marespand, and he is said to have written a tract in Pehlevi as an admonition to his son Zarthushtra. It describes

in detail the peculiar virtues of each day of the Zoroastrian month, and is entitled *Madegane-lak-Yom.*

Great stress is laid in it upon the importance of each day in its bearing upon certain relations and transactions of life. Beginning with the first of the month, which is the proper one to choose for entering a new dwelling or garden, we find that every single day is set apart as the fittest and most auspicious for certain special works, of either devotion or worldly business. Some are best for beginning a journey or voyage, others for the regulation of matters of domestic economy, some again for social gatherings and festivities, and others again for the pursuit of learning, while not a few are reserved for rest and pious contemplation. We thus find from a glance at the list of days and their appropriate works that the Zoroastrian, in both his spiritual and his temporal life, should be guided, in the selection of a proper time for every new work, by a knowledge of the auspiciousness or otherwise of the several days of the month.

We therefore give an English translation[1] of Dastur Adarbad's description of each day's significance as being highly interesting and as showing what an important part his teaching must have played in the regulation of a Zoroastrian's life and conduct at that period.

[1] Translated from Pehlevi for the author by Dastur Darasha Peshotanji Sanjana, B.A.

"1. *Ahura Mazda* being the name of the Creator of the Universe, be this day devoted to the remembrance of God, abstaining from all worldly business. It is auspicious for the holding of rejoicings and weddings, for benedictions (blessings), and other righteous actions. This day is of good omen for the first entrance into a newly-built house or garden, and for other occasions of joy and delight.

"2. *Behman* being the name of the greatest of the angels, it is fortunate for people to assemble on that day to discuss topics concerning wisdom, and also for kings to hold councils composed of wise men and officers of state, to call into their presence wise and friendly people, and inquire after their health and welfare. It is auspicious for people to show wisdom, and to be merciful in all good actions pertaining to justice.

"3. On the day of *Ardibehesht* (it befits the inhabitants of a country) to enter into terms of peace, and to show marks of amity towards each other, to prepare healing drugs and to take them, to discuss the operations of the human soul and the highest conception of it, to cause children to enter religious institutions, to remain in harmony with one's own masters or kings, and to do such works as are worthy of praise by the 'good creation.'

"4. On the day of *Shehrivar* (it is auspicious for the king) to appoint the great officials, chiefs, secre-

taries (ministers), and other functionaries of the state, and to award them their salaries; to call into his presence venial but loyal offenders, and to lighten in due measure the weight of their penalties, and to pardon those who are deserving of clemency. This day would be also propitious for great men to be generous towards their inferiors, or to entrust to them vocations according to their choice; to add to the almshouses for darvishes; to alleviate the misery and check the oppression and injustice practised against the needy; and it is desirable to take measures for their assistance and to look after them, and to keep them in a decent condition by giving them adequate recompense for their labours.

"5. On the day of *Spendarmad* it is good to solicit the hand of a woman, to take her as a bride to one's own house, to remove into a new house or residence, to repair an old mansion, to carry on agriculture and to render the soil thereby fertile. The work that is begun on this day requires a long time for its completion. Those who are born on this day are very appropriately characterised by patience, mental skill, contentment, grandeur, and liberality.

"6. The day of *Khordad* is good for purifying and adorning the body, for raising a new fountain, for digging a fresh well, for laying open a new road, for the gratuitous distribution of water, and for storing water and crops, which bring prosperity. In all

kindred actions the auspiciousness of this day is witnessed.

"7. The day of *Amerdad* is the last day of the first week of every Zoroastrian month. This day is set apart as one of rest. On this day a man should be at his ease in body and soul; on this day he should form an estimate of the income accruing from his accumulated riches, from his cattle, his increase of wealth, from agriculture, his garden, beds of flowers, and forests. Be this day considered as important for working to acquire whatever objects tend towards human security and health, and particularly, by the *Mazdayasnan*, for calling to mind such of their actions as are imposed upon them as a (religious) duty.

"8. The day of *Depadar* is the day of the Creator of the Universe. On this day it is fit that the sublime knowledge of the (Zoroastrian) relig be acquired, and that pious people be endowed with charitable gifts and be maintained in delight and prosperity.

"9. On the day of *Adar* (it is good) to bestow liberal alms upon the diseased, as well as to invoke the help of the Almighty by offering prayers to Him in the sacred places of worship belonging to the Adarans or fire-temples. Hence on this day, too, let numerous offerings be presented to fire-temples, and all solemn intentions for performing deeds of righteousness be fulfilled.

"10. The day of *Avan* is for making a voyage over the sea, for irrigation and the digging of canals for the passage of water, for cleaning the waters of a well, for planting trees and sowing corn. This day is reckoned as the principal one for undertaking works that are advantageous and beneficial to agriculture. On the other hand, let all such actions as contaminate the 'pure water of God' be guarded against and avoided.

"11. The day of *Khur* (*Khurshed*) is named from the light of the sun and the (consequent) appearance of objects (in this world), and is (therefore) regarded as the best time, for they have said that all good actions should be unhesitatingly done on this day.

"12. The day of *Mah* is favourable to the fulness of earnings. On this day let prayers be recited for the acquisition of happiness and delight unto the soul, and let good works be commenced. The Yazdan-parasts (God-worshippers) of Iran disapproved of occupying themselves on this day in any worldly business or profession, and regarded it as necessary, for those who are submissive to the Almighty, to acquire a high knowledge respecting Him. Such also is their precept, that to keep himself in comfort and to earn a good income one should labour with great eagerness in any work connected with religion.

"13. On the day of *Tir* one might enter a scientific institution and there learn the four branches of

science (viz.)—1, Letters; 2, Astrology; 3, Navigation; 4, How to erect fountains of water, how to dig wells, how to form canals for the passage of river and other water, to learn the art of building bridges, boats, ships, and other like conveyances; and for the improvement of the body and the soul (mind) to learn the art of swimming. This day is reckoned as the best one for numerous sorts of actions.

"14. The day of *Gosh* is the last day of the second week. On this day (it is auspicious) to saddle and ride quadrupeds, such as mules, horses, etc., to reflect upon the actions done during the past week, and perform such deeds as would improve one's own person and soul, and to render one's self worthy of a good reward. On this day one should not make cattle—oxen and other species of cattle—or sheep work, but keep them in ease. He should not eat their meat, but only use their milk. On the day of *Gosh*, as on that of *Aneran*, it is good to clean the hoofs of beasts of burden, and to shoe them, and to keep them in good condition.

"15. The day of *Depmehr* is the fitting one for (undertaking) new works concerning wisdom and religion; and let this very day be regarded as proper and according to rule for (giving a religious) mandate, for legal decisions, and for the distribution of property.

"16. The day of *Mithra*.—As amongst the Yazdas

only Mithra decides upon (the good or evil actions of) all creatures; on this day it is fitting to better the condition of criminals, to increase one's love for the good people, to arrange a feasting party for the entertainment of friends, to have an earnest regard for deserving people, to repent of one's sinful actions, to perform public penance, to forgive the guilty and to relieve them from the fear of their guilt, to occupy one's self in pious actions and to repress and relinquish any vengeful thought or struggle, and to be continually kind and friendly (towards fellow-creatures).

"17. The day of *Srosh* is glorious and life-giving, for the God Ahura Mazda appointed *Srosh* a ruler and watcher over this world. On this day it is incumbent (upon the Mazdayasnan) to abstain from sinning, to preserve himself from guilt, and to approve of actions which can absolve him from moral crimes by means of repentance. Those also who are respectable and venerable, of famous power, and possessing the kingly throne and crown, should wash their faces and carefully comb their hair.

"18. On the day of *Rashnu* thou shalt never utter falsehood or practise deceit of any kind, and never commit any blemishing deeds; and thou shalt attend to such acts as are of a higher character. Never utter any false promises. Speak only what is true and just. Abstain from swearing and from doing any action of a doubtful nature.

"19. The day of *Fravardin* is itself the time (for the coming) of the Frohars (into this world). Hence on this day let the Yazashne, Darun, Myazd, or the Afringan ceremonies be performed in the name of all the pious Frohars, and (moreover) let the Frohars of all who have skilfully worked (in this world) be extolled and remembered. Be this day passed in the doing of as many meritorious actions (enjoined by religion) as possible, and in forming familiar acquaintance and friendship with many people.

"20. The day of *Behram*.—Amongst the invisible Yazdas Behram is the commander-in-chief of the army, and possesses the most splendid banner. In his Khohnuman he is called the courage and victory of the religion. In the battles between the Yazdas and the demons, in races, on the hunting-ground, and amongst those who perform good actions acceptable to Ahura Mazda, he (Behram) is the most excellent leader, the most courageous and invincible one. Everywhere does he go to make people daring, and to grant them victory. On this day one should put on the dress made ready for wearing in the chase and in the battle of heroes; and let the sheep and goats that are fit to be selected for the day of Ram be preserved, similarly as (mankind is protected) by the king of the world, by the brave and unconquerable hero, or by the lighted fire.

"21. The day of *Ram* is the day of the Genius of

Pleasure. Be this day therefore passed in preparing and decorating military arms, implements, and garments, and select them for wearing in token of rejoicing.

"22. The day of *Vata* (*Goad*) is the last day of the third week. This day is set apart for rest, and is called the day for reckoning up one's profitable or injurious actions (done during the past seven days). On this day one should go into the company of virtuous people, and should feel a desire for listening to their moral teachings, so that no perverse actions may take place. And one should continue to be a participator in the works (conducive to) the felicity of the soul, and should repel from his mind any heartaching or sorrowful thought that has occurred to him; for if on the day which has to be passed happily one should continue his grief and should not avoid business, he would be fatigued and would not obtain any rest, but be much injured in his health. On the day of *Vata*, therefore, one should quickly repress his grief and sorrow, and suppress by all means sad and mournful sighs, that by the power of *Vata* he may become altogether happy.

"23. On the day of *Depdin* (it befits one) to expound the religion to good people, and to encourage them to perform righteous deeds (enjoined by it), and to dissuade them from every sinful action, and to incite them to do wisely many works pertaining to religion.

"24. On the day of *Din* let an assembly be formed for delivering a lecture on fidelity towards the (Zoroastrian) religion, let one improve the condition of one's household, make preparations for a wedding, solicit the hand of a woman, and take measures for the education of religious people.

"25. On the day of *Kherad* (*Ashish-vangh*) the masters and mistresses of houses should adorn their children with golden dresses or ornaments. And let the poor be continually looked after and assisted.

"26. On the day of *Ashtad* let those who are deserving of a good recompense be respected and honoured, and the imprisoned criminals and those that are worthy of chastisement be punished. On this day people should refrain from going to battle, from feats of heroism, from quarrels or disputes, as well as from following trade, and they should prefer sedentary employment.

"27. On the day of *Asman* no debt should be incurred . . . but deserving and good actions—viz. those pertaining to pious worship, commerce, and war —*be performed.*

"28. The day of *Jamyad* is auspicious for laying out beds of flowers in a garden, for consecrating a newly-built house or dwelling, for planting trees, for tilling the ground, for garnering up ripe corn, and for storing corn and stacking grass. One should attend to other similar actions, but he ought not to take any medicine.

"29. The day of *Marespand* is the fitting one for increasing one's eager desire for knowledge and wisdom pertaining to religion, and for restoring, preparing, and improving the body by means of medicine or remedy, and for pronouncing blessings. This day is also preferred as a propitious one for the beginning and continuing of righteous actions for the glory of religion, and for extirpating the houses of idols, and for expiating sins committed through necessity, and for purifying the body and the soul from pollutions.

"30. The day of *Aneran* is the last day of the month. This day is for taking rest and for the cessation of business, and for reckoning up the virtuous actions (done during the past month). In the beginning of this day one should give the poor their wages, one should form a determination and make a vow for the praising and adoration of some special Yazda according to his own intention. From this day one should begin to make preparations for the works to be achieved on the day of Ahura Mazda. On this day people should undergo purification of the body and put on decent clothing, should perform penance for the expiation of sins, suppress anger, forget revenge, be reconciled to enemies, and let such actions be done as would make friends of other people and give pleasure to body and soul."

The five days at the end of the twelve months ought to be added for the completion of the year.

Of these *Ahunavatgas* resembles the day of *Ahura Mazda;* and the other four—namely, *Ushtavatgas, Spendamangas, Vohukhshatar-gas,* and *Veheshto-yasht-gas*—resemble *Vohuman* (*Behman*), *Atro* (*Adar*), *Mithra* (*Mehr*), and *Din* respectively.

It is scarcely necessary to say that these precepts so laboriously framed by Adarbad no longer form a guide to the actions in the daily life of the present Parsis. They are even not known to most, and this ignorance may rather be looked upon as a matter of congratulation than otherwise, for indeed, in these times of keen contest and feverish activity, there would be more disappointments than fulfilment of wishes in store for a faithful follower of Adarbad.

We may now describe the most important of Parsi festivals. The chief aim of these religious observances is to promote social harmony, charity, and philanthropy. Zoroastrianism inculcates sublime moral principles of benevolence, charity, and brotherly love, combined with innocent pleasures.

Pateti or New Year's Day.—Of all the Zoroastrian festivals the so-called *Pateti* holiday is observed with more or less religious fervour by Parsis of every rank and condition. It is the day of *Ahura Mazda* in the month of *Fravardin*, which should be properly called *Naoroz.* Amongst the Kadmis it falls one month earlier than amongst the Shehenshais. The name Pateti, which is a corrupt form of the Avesta

word Paitita, literally signifies "fallen into repentance;" hence it denotes the day on which one prays to God for absolution from sins committed during the past year. On this day the Zoroastrian rises earlier than usual, makes ablutions, sometimes even undergoes the ceremony of purification called the *Nahan* ceremony, dresses himself in new clothes and offers prayers imploring the mercy of *Ahura Mazda*, and beseeching the divine blessing upon himself and his family. He begins his prayers by extolling the powers of God, and then asks forgiveness for his bad actions during the past year, and finally with offerings of sandal-wood he attends the *Atash-Behram* (the chief fire-temple), and again prays to recover the love and mercy of the Deity, who is ever beneficent towards His faithful creatures. His prayers over, he offers alms to the poor priests and indigent people. The rest of the day is spent in enjoyment with the other members of the family. On this day visits of New Year's congratulations are paid and received.

Rapithvan.—Originally it was intended to announce the commencement of the summer. But it does not now answer the purpose in consequence of the leap-year not having been taken into account. It is the third day of the first month, and an imposing ceremony is performed in the presence of a large assemblage in the chief fire-temple in honour

of the archangel Ardibehesht Ameshaspend, who presides over light and fire.

Khordad-Sal.—This festival is celebrated in commemoration of several important sacred events which occurred on the day of *Khordad* in the month of *Fravardin*, and which are given in detail in a short Pehlevi tract called *Madegane Binae-Fravardin Yome-Khordad*. It is observed as a holiday in honour of the revelation of *Ahura Mazda* to *Zarathushtra* (Zoroaster) and of the anniversary of the birth of that Prophet. Religious ceremonies are performed in the morning and at midnight. The rest of the day is passed in feasting and enjoyment. Khordad is an archangel presiding over water, vegetation, and all kinds of fruit.

Amerdad-Sal.—This is a day on which the Parsis seek enjoyment after the ten days of the Muktad, and when their religious observances are over. The sacred books attach no particular importance to this festival. It is a day which has been added to the Khordad-Sal by holiday-makers.

Mediozarem.—According to the Zoroastrian religion, the world was created in three hundred and sixty-five days, at six unequal intervals. At the end of each of these there was a day of rest. These intervals are called Gahambars, which fall six times in a year. On these occasions the Parsis follow the custom of the ancient Persians, who in their time gathered to-

gether and said prayers. The king and the peasant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, all mixed together, and partook of food and fruit after saying their prayers. The custom is still followed as far as practicable in Bombay. A public feast is held of plain food, and all, whether rich or poor, partake of it. By these means social intercourse is promoted, harmony and goodwill towards each other cultivated, and philanthropy engendered. The Medi-ozarem is the first of the six Gahambars, and lasts for five days, from the 11th to the 15th day of Ardibehesht, the second month.

The second Gahambar falls on the 11th day of the fourth month (Tir). The angel presiding over the Tir Jasan is said to be the dispenser of wealth, and to bring down water from the celestial ocean to fertilise the earth. In times of drought the help of this spirit is invoked.

The third series of Gahambars commences on the 26th day of the sixth month Shehrivar, and is known as the Patasham (the season of gathering the harvest).

The fourth Gahambar is called *Eathrem* (summer farewell), and represents the creation of the trees. It is celebrated from the 26th to the 30th day of the seventh month Mehr. In this month the 16th day is observed as a Jasan in honour of the sun.

The fifth Gahambar (Mediarem) denotes the period when the lower animals were created, and

is observed from the 16th to the 20th day of the tenth month Deh.

The sixth and last of the Gahambar festivals, called *Hamaspathmadin* (winter farewell), consists of the five days after the end of the year of three hundred and sixty days, thus making up three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. These days are called Gathas, from the five Gathas of the "Yasna," and they are observed with great respect and sanctity. The Parsis recite the Gathas or sacred songs, as man was created during this period. The priests also are employed to pray for the souls of the departed.

Atash-Behram-Salgari or *Srosh Roz.*—The sons of the late Hormasji Bamanji Wadia built a large fire-temple in honour of their deceased father in Bombay, and the 17th day of the second month is the anniversary of the inauguration of this Atash-Behram. On this day the "dastur" or high priest performs the Jasan ceremony in the presence of Parsis, who assemble in large numbers in the fire-temple, and a sermon is preached at the conclusion of the ceremony. The day is observed as a Parsi holiday, on which, after their prayers, they enjoy themselves. The Parsi ladies also go to the fire-temple in their rich holiday attire and join with their relatives and friends in keeping this anniversary as a day of rejoicing.

The Jamshedi Naoroz.—This festival derives its name from King Jamshid of the Peshdadian dynasty,

who was the first to celebrate it in Persia. It is also called Sultani Naoroz, and goes back for thousands of years. On this day the sun enters the sign of Aries, and it is also the day on which the ancient Persians began their new year and made great rejoicings. The Parsi new year's day ought to commence from this date instead of the Pateti day, as it does at present. We have explained, in previous pages, the neglect of the Indian Parsis in not adding one whole month every hundred and twenty years to make up for the deficiency caused by their omitting to take into account one-fourth of a day at the end of the year. This day is observed by the Parsis as a great holiday. In Bombay the native Freemason lodges celebrate this festival.

Zarthoshti Diso.—The prophet Zoroaster is said to have died at the age of seventy-seven years at Bactria, the capital of the Kayanian kings. The 11th day of the tenth month *Deh* is the anniversary of his death, and is kept with pious observances.

The Muktad.—The name *Muktad*, which is said to be corrupted from *muktiatma*, the soul that has passed from purgatory into paradise, is used to designate the last ten days of the Zoroastrian year, including the last five days of the last month *Spendarmad*, and the five intercalary days called the *Gatha Gahambars*. These are dedicated to the pious *Frohars* (*Fravashis* in the Avesta), the so-called

manes of the dead, and are spent in reciting prayers and in performing ceremonies in memory of the departed. According to a passage in the Fravardin Yasht, the Frohars of the faithful Zoroastrians visit the houses of their survivors on earth for ten days and nights at the time of *Hamaspathmadin*, uttering this wish: "Who will praise us? who will offer us a sacrifice? who will meditate upon us? of which of us will the name be taken for invocation? of which of us will the soul be worshipped by you with a sacrifice?" These days are passed by the Parsis in prayers. The priests also offer prayers in memory of the dead.

Besides the holidays already described, the day having the same name as the month is distinguished from the other days of the month, and set apart for "Jasan," which means the performance of prayers and religious ceremonies in the presence of the whole community, among whom the fruit and flowers used during the ceremonies are at the end distributed. The more important and popular of these "Jasan" days may be next described.

Fravardin Jasan.—Fravardin is the first month of the Zoroastrian year, and it is also the name of the nineteenth day of each of the twelve months. It is sacred in connection with certain ceremonies in honour of the dead. It is derived from the word "fravashi" or "frohar," in the Avesta, which means "protector." These protectors are omnipresent, being supposed to

be placed everywhere by Ahura Mazda for guarding against evil powers and keeping the universe in order. The Fravashi or the presiding angel watches not only over the living, but also over the dead and over the still unborn. This day is dedicated to the memory of the dead, and the Parsis repair to the towers of silence to offer prayers for the good of the souls of their departed relations and friends, and oftentimes priests are paid to repeat certain prayers in their behalf. Similar ceremonies in honour of the Frohars are also performed on the 19th day (Fravardin) of the month of Adar.

Avan or Aban Arduisura Jasan.—This festival is held on the 10th day of the eighth month. The angel Arduisura Anahita presides over the sea. The words, however, mean sublime, strong, or spotless. The Parsis, on this day, approach the sea or river, and having lived so long with their Hindu brethren, have borrowed some of their objectionable customs, such as offering sugar, flour, cocoa-nuts, etc., to the sea. But the more enlightened portion of the Parsi community have discarded such customs. A grand fair is held in Bombay, at which all sections of the inhabitants of the city join for purposes of pleasure and enjoyment. It is observed as a Parsi holiday.

Adar Jasan.—Adar is the name of the 9th day and the ninth month of the year. It is dedicated to fire. On this day the Parsis, both male and female,

go to the fire-temples in hundreds to say their prayers. A fair is held in Bombay on the occasion, and the Parsis observe it as a holiday. They appear in public in their holiday attire, and rejoicings are continued till late in the evening.

Behman Jasan.—This festival is held in honour of the spirit which rules over the animal kingdom. It falls on the 2d day of the eleventh month, both of which have the same name Behman. During this month the Parsis feed stray animals, or those that are brought to their doors, with grass and other similar food. On this day the Parsis abstain from eating animal flesh.

This brings to a conclusion our summary of the chief Parsi festivals.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ZOROASTRIANS IN INDIA—THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS (*continued*).

Parsi domestic life—Births and their attendant ceremonies—Present-giving—Seclusion enforced after confinement—Sanitary objections to this—Various improvements suggested by experience—Attempts to discover the child's destiny—Mixture of good sense and superstition—"The book of fate is sealed"—Choosing a name—Parsi system of giving names—The "joshi"—List of Parsi names—Investiture with the "sudra" and "kusti"—Question of making converts—What the Panchayet decided—Ceremony of marriage—Early marriages—Usual age of marriage—Custom among the Zoroastrians in Persia—Professional match-makers—The details of the religious ceremony—The social rejoicings—The final shower of rice—The number seven—The closing questions—And prayers—Healths given at the banquet—That of the Queen-Empress—Families not broken up by marriage—All reside together—Separations rare between parents and children on this account—Mode of marriage in Persia—Widows permitted to re-marry—Death ceremonies—The last prayers—The funeral procession—Manner of nullifying evil influences—The seven "has"—Early removal of the body—The "dokhma" or tower of silence—Various erroneous suppositions concerning Parsi funerals—Belief as to the soul not quitting the body for three days—Description of a tower of silence—They vary in size, but are built on one plan—Ceremonies at its consecration—Great merit in building "dokhmas"—Their inviolability preserved—Sir Richard Temple's opinion—The whole question of Parsi burial reviewed—Objections to it qualified on closer knowledge—Mr. Monier Williams's opinion—Visit of the Prince of Wales to a "dokhma"—*In Memoriam* services to the dead—Offerings in fruit and flowers—The prayer of repentance.

We now proceed to give an account of the domestic life of the Parsis. We shall begin with the infant. Before it is ushered into the world, the young lady

who is about to become a mother is made to perform certain ceremonies, a description of which we think will be interesting. As soon as it is known that such an event may be shortly expected there is much rejoicing in the families of the parents of both husband and wife. When the wife has advanced five months she is presented by her mother-in-law with a new dress, which she puts on and then goes to the house of her own parents, who also give her a dress.

After she has advanced either seven, or sometimes the full nine months, what is called the "Agharni" or pregnancy ceremony is performed. It is as interesting as it is novel in character. An auspicious day having been selected, her mother-in-law early in the morning puts a suit of new clothes on the young lady, and sends to her parents a present of fish, curds, milk, and sugar. The young lady's parents return these presents, adding thereto some more fish, curds, milk, rings, corn, etc., and at noon a richly prepared repast is sent for the whole of the family and friends who may have been invited for the occasion. In the afternoon the ground-floor of a room facing the east is ornamented with chunam (lime) and various coloured powders, with the devices of fish, peacocks, and other birds or animals, and variegated flowers. The young lady is made to stand on a flat wooden stool, two or three inches high, and placed

on the ground, ornamented in the way described. A new dress is then put on her, a mark with "kunku" (red powder) is made on her forehead, and in the fold of her "sari," near her breast, a cocoa-nut, betel-nut leaves, dates, and other descriptions of dry fruit are placed, as symbols of fructification. With all this on her person, she goes to her parents' residence, accompanied by her relatives and friends. They all take with them some wheat in a basket, and also sweetmeat, as being emblematical of plenty and happiness. On reaching her parents' house she stops at the threshold, where her mother receives her with an ovation of rice and the breaking of a cocoa-nut and egg. On entering she places her right foot in the house first, and goes direct to the room where she expects to be confined. Here she takes a light in one hand and a cup of water in the other, and goes round the room seven times, besprinkling it with a little water at each turn. The object is said to be that her progeny may never witness darkness and drought, *i.e.* that her children may always enjoy the sunshine of life and be never in want of water, as the vernacular phrase goes. Her mother then removes the clothes she is wearing, and puts a new dress on her, sweetens her mouth with sweetmeat or sugar, and sends her back to her husband's house with the wheat and other things, after adding some more of each article. After a short interval

presents are sent to her husband by her mother. These presents consist of new clothes, rings, shawls, etc., which are placed in a tray with sweetmeats wrapped up in a silvered paper in the shape of a cone. The ladies who carry these presents are then treated to a dinner at the husband's house, after which they recite certain songs appropriate to the auspicious occasion. As the time of her accouchement approaches, her mother-in-law gives her some little money and a cocoa-nut, and makes a small mark with red powder on her forehead, and sends her to her parents.

At the house of the girl's mother, some days before the probable date of accouchement, the place or room previously mentioned is set apart for the purpose. As soon as the woman is in travail she is taken to this room, where an iron cot with a cotton bed is provided for her, and a cradle with an iron framework for the expected child. On the day of accouchement the mother goes to visit her daughter-in-law, and puts on her bed a few rupees and some dry rice as an auspicious omen. The mother of the girl then gives the husband's mother a dinner, and before leaving she is presented with a new dress. The husband's mother, on the following day, sends some sweetmeat and distributes it among their respective relations and friends.

According to Parsi custom, a woman is supposed to be unclean for forty days after childbirth, and

during that period she is not allowed to touch anything besides her own bed and the child's cradle. Nor can any member of the family, not even her own husband, touch her. She must not be allowed to walk on a carpet, and the floor of her chamber is consequently uncovered. The rich and well-to-do, who live in large houses by themselves, set apart a room for this purpose; but where separate families live as tenants on different flats of a house, a room on the ground-floor is generally assigned by the landlord for the use of all the tenants on such occasions. This practice of keeping the woman apart during the first forty days of her confinement is not based on any religious injunction. Some of the sages of ancient days are supposed to have devised the plan in the interest of the woman's health for keeping her separate from her husband during her monthly turn, and during her confinement, as well as to afford her a sufficient period of rest, when she should not be compelled to do any household work by unfeeling mothers-in-law or apathetic and cruel husbands. The practice, however, from the nature of the room in which she is confined, is productive of the greatest harm to her in her delicate state, and also to the little stranger whom she has recently brought into the world. There is hardly any ventilation in her room, so that the mother and child are deprived of fresh air at the very time that they most need it. Heaven alone knows how

many poor babes and delicate mothers have been sacrificed to this prejudice, which, by the practice of centuries, has obtained a stronger hold on the minds of the Parsis than if it had been a strict religious ordinance.

The richer classes, who have their own bungalows, are much better off than their poor brethren. They have a large and commodious room for this event, and employ one or two maids to help the mother and nurse the child; whereas the poorer women, notwithstanding their delicate condition, have always to attend to themselves as well as to their infants. The wealthy Parsi lady can take a little walking exercise about her house on bare floors, but she is not allowed to touch any member of the family, or any article of furniture in the place. If the child is not nursed by its mother it is taken away from her, and on being washed is given into the charge of the wet nurse in another room. After this there is no risk of pollution from coming into contact with the child.

On the fortieth day the woman is bathed, and after undergoing purification she is allowed to mix as before with all the members of the family. With the exception of the iron portion of the cot and cradle, everything else which has been used or touched by the mother or child is thrown away or given to the sweeper.

The Parsis are now beginning to see the folly of keeping the woman in seclusion, as thus described,

while she is in a delicate state of health, but none dare break through the practice except in cases of serious illness, when the doctor may order the mother and child to be removed to some other place. When the woman is so ill as to be considered in danger, the prejudice nowadays vanishes, and the other members of the family attend upon her, believing that in such extremity there is no sin in breaking what they still imagine to be a religious injunction. Those, however, who have been polluted by the touch of the woman under confinement cannot touch others till they have washed their bodies and changed their clothes. Among the better classes of Parsis, when a European doctor is called in to see the woman or child, he is of course considered polluted when he touches either of them, and the orthodox head of the family, or other male members, refrain from shaking hands with him on leaving the house. The latter, being acquainted with their manners and customs, takes no offence when he finds everybody standing at a respectful distance and showing him the way out. Some of the Parsi doctors, however, under such circumstances, bathe and put on fresh clothes before departing from the house, which is very gratifying to the old ladies, who are loud in their praises for this attention to decorum. The younger members of the community, belonging to a more advanced school, only laugh at such prejudices as being absurd.

We should mention that as soon as a woman is seized with the pains of labour a correctly-set watch or clock is assigned to the care of a member of the family, whose duty it is to note down the exact time, even to a second, when the child comes into the world. If all goes on well, the fifth day after this interesting event is one of rejoicing in the family, and a large "bhona" (meal consisting of various choice viands) is sent by the parents of the girl to her husband's family. On the night of the sixth day a curious practice obtains founded on superstition. Near the girl's bed is placed a tray containing a sheet of blank paper, ink, pen, a cocoa-nut, and red powder, for the intended service of the goddess who presides over the destiny of the child, and who is supposed to determine its good luck. It is a common notion that the child's destiny is fixed on the sixth night from the day of birth. On the following morning, when the paper is scrutinised, of course no writing is visible as to the child's fate; but the anxious parents console themselves with the happy idea that the writing is invisible, and that the "book of fate is sealed." A few days subsequently suits of clothes for the child and its mother, a few silver toys, a silk handkerchief, betel-nut and leaves, cardamoms, cloves, nutmegs, etc., are sent for them by the mother-in-law. On the same day, or as soon after as convenient, a "joshi" or astrologer, who is either a Parsi or a Hindu

Brahman, is invited to the house to cast the nativity of the child. When he arrives there he takes his seat on a carpet which is spread out for him, and tries his best to put on the appearance of a sage to whom the book of futurity is not sealed. Even the little ones yet at school gather round the "joshi" out of curiosity and feel much inclined to titter at all this fuss. They are only prevented from doing so by the watchful eyes of their grand-dames who stand in superstitious awe of the "joshi." The astrologer begins his work by gravely asking the oldest lady the exact time the child was born. She has probably forgotten the time because her mind has been distracted by the unruly youngsters around her. She therefore orders them to go out, and then asks one of her female companions for the information required. The paper on which the day, hour, minutes, and seconds were noted is produced. The "joshi" then takes a piece of chalk from his turban and with it draws a number of figures on a wooden board which is set before him. His dexterity in counting and recounting the stars under whose region or influence the child is born is greatly admired by the superstitious creatures around him. All the relatives of the child, especially the female portion, press forward to hear the "joshi" predict the future life and prospects of the baby. He first gives out the names the child can bear according to its affinity to the stars under whose

influence it was born, and the parents afterwards make the choice of one of them according to their own pleasure. Should one of the names mentioned have been borne by an ancestor, preference is naturally given to it. In recent years, however, this rule has not always been observed, and names not included in those given by the "joshi" are sometimes adopted.[1]

[1] The Parsis have no surnames which go down from generation to generation in a family, as is the case among Europeans. The sons of Thompson, Brown, Jones, and Smith, and their descendants, are all Thompson, Brown, Jones, and Smith, but the Parsis give one name to the child, and after its name is taken that of the father. If the son is named Ardeshir, and his father's name is Framji, the name he would always bear would be Ardeshir Framji. When this son attains to man's estate and a child is born to him, and supposing that he is named Pestanji, he is called Pestanji Ardeshir, and when again a son is born to Pestanji, and if he is named Jehangir, he is called Jehangir Pestanji. So the grandfather's name is always dropped. Owing to there being many persons of the same name, it became a practice to add a certain "atak" or distinguishing affix indicating the profession to which they belong. This is handed down for one or two generations, but as soon as any member of that family takes to any other profession or calling he changes his "atak." For instance, if Manakji Kavasji is a carpenter he writes his name as Manakji Kavasji Sutar (carpenter). If his son Jamshedji becomes a schoolmaster, he calls himself Jamshedji Manakji Master, and if his son becomes an attorney or solicitor he adds Vakil (solicitor) after the names of himself and his father. In some cases the name of a distinguished ancestor is preserved by adding it after the father's name instead of the "atak," but this is not continued for more than four or five generations.

We now give an almost complete list of names of Parsi men and women in general use at present. Those that have a Hindu origin are marked with asterisks, and the rest are Persian names. Of course the Hindu names were adopted by the Parsis after their settlement in India, just as they adopted many of the Hindu manners and customs and dress, and also perhaps to hide their nationality in order to escape persecution at the hands of the fanatical Mahomedans.

After the "joshi" has given the names which the child may bear, the lady who is supposed to be best

NAMES OF MEN.

Adarji.
Ardeshir.

Bamanji.
Bapuji.
Barjorji.
Bejanji.
Beramji.
*Bhikhaji.
*Bhimji.

*Dadabhai, or Dadi.
*Dajibhai.
Darasha.
*Dhanjibhai, or Dhanjisha.
Dinsha.
Dorabji.
*Dosabhai.

Edalji.
Erachji, or Erachsha.

*Fakirji.
Fardunji.
Firozji, or Firozsha, or Phirozsha.
Framji, or Framroz.

*Ghandhibhai.
Godrezji.
Gustadji.

*Hiraji.
*Hirji, or Hirjibhai.
Homji.
Hormasji.

Jalbhai.
Jamaspji.
Jamshedji.
Jehangir.
*Jijibhai.
*Jivaji.
*Jivanji.

Kaikhosru.
Kaikobad.
Kavasji, or Kavasha.
Kerbadji.
Kharshedji.
Khodabax.
*Kuvarji.

*Lavji.
*Limji, or Limjibhai.

*Manakji, or Manaksha.
Mancherji, or Manchersha.
Marzban.
Merjibhai.
Mervanji.
*Motabhai.

Nadarsha.
*Nanabhai.
Naorozji.
Nasarvanji.

Palanji.
Pestanji, or Peshotanji.
*Pochaji.

Rastamji.
Ratanji, or Ratansha.

Santokji.
Savaksha.
Shapurji.
Sheriadji.
Sorabji.
Suklaji.

Tehmuras.
Temulji.

Ukarji.

NAMES OF WOMEN.

Aimai.
Alibai.
Avabai.

Bachubai.
Banubai.
*Bhikhaiji.

*Chandanbai.

*Dhanbai.
Dinbai.
*Dosibai.

Gulbai.

*Hirabai.

*Jaiji.
Jarbai.

Kharshedbai.
*Kuvarbai.

*Manakbai.
Meherbai.
Mithibai.
*Motibai.

*Nahlibai.
Navazbai.

Pirozbai.

*Ratanbai, or Ratubai.
*Rupabai.

*Sakarbai.
Shirin.
*Suklibai.
*Sunabai.

*Virbaiji.

up in the ways of the world steps forward and puts a number of questions to the "joshi" regarding the child's future. The fellow, who thoroughly understands what his forecastings are worth, appears absorbed in meditation, as if he were considering the solution of a difficult mathematical problem, and, after a few minutes' pause, declares that the child, having been born under the influence of certain stars, and under certain conjunctions, is likely to be a lucky one. This sends a thrill of joy through the hearts of all the relatives. Question after question is put to the "joshi," who is generally equal to the occasion in his answers. He knows full well what will please the ladies most, and replies accordingly. He assures them that the child is destined to make a name for itself. When questioned about the influence the child will exert upon the fortunes of his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and the family generally, the pretender gravely delivers himself in some such strain as this: "The child really is a lucky one. The father will, through him or her, have increased respectability and wealth, and the mother will be very fortunate. By the birth of this babe there will be increased affection between the husband and wife. With its brothers and sisters it will be on good terms when of age," and he tells other flattering tales of a similar kind. The "joshi" is then told to prepare a horo-

scope of the child, which he sends in a few days, and for which he is paid a fee of from two to five rupees.

The "joshis" have a good knowledge of human nature, and not unfrequently make correct hits. They know that children suffer from teething and other ailments in their first and second years, and they tell the heads of the family to take care of the child when it is between five and seven months old, as it is then likely to suffer. If the child does suffer, as children invariably do during dentition, the ladies of the family immediately say, "Oh, the 'joshi' predicted this." The men generally laugh, but Parsi females are not yet sufficiently advanced in knowledge to be conscious of their folly. The progress of education, now happily commenced, will soon banish these superstitious ideas.

The investiture of the child, whether boy or girl, with the "sudra" and "kusti" takes place, according to religious injunction, any time after it has attained the age of six years and three months, but not before that age. The wearing of the "jabhla" is then discontinued, and, as in the case of the adult, the "sudra" and "kusti" are worn instead. This ceremony is performed in an imposing manner, as will be seen from the following description. The boy or girl, whom we will term the candidate, sits before a Parsi priest, who utters certain prayers and makes him or her drink three times the sacred "nirangdin," and chew part

of a leaf of the pomegranate tree. The child is then bathed, after which it is dressed in a pair of trousers and cap with a clean white linen sheet wrapped round the body. In this state the candidate is taken by the priest to the hall or room where the ceremony is to be performed, and where are already assembled the "dastur" or chief priest, the relatives of the child, and a number of male and female guests invited to witness the ceremony. On this occasion all the ladies appear in their best attire and adorn themselves with fine jewellery. The assembly, composed as it is of the "dastur" and other priests dressed in their snow-white robes and turbans, of the gentlemen who wear their best clothes, and of the ladies in their brilliant dresses of many colours, is a pleasing and gay sight to behold. Throughout the performance of the ceremony strict silence prevails, which adds considerable solemnity to the occasion. The "dastur" and the priests take their places upon a rich carpet spread upon the floor, while the members of the family and guests sit around on chairs or sofas. The candidate is seated on a flat wooden stool before the "dastur," who, together with another priest, begins to recite the "patet" or prayer of repentance, in which the candidate joins if he is able to do so. After this the "dastur" requires the child to hold the "sudra" with both hands, and, placing his own upon them, causes the following confession of faith to be

CEREMONY OF INVESTITURE WITH THE SUDRA AND KUSTI.

repeated: "Praise be to the Mazdayasnan religion, created by the holiness, the purity, and the wisdom of Ahura Mazda. The good, righteous, right religion which the Lord has sent to His creatures is that which Zoroaster has brought. The religion is the religion of Zoroaster, the religion of Ahura Mazda given to Zoroaster."

After this the "dastur" removes the linen sheet which had at first been wrapped round the child's body and puts on in place thereof the "sudra," held up to that point in the child's hands. The "dastur" then passes the "kusti" round the child's waist three times, repeating the "kusti nirang," as it is called, after which the infant is reseated on the stool, and the "dastur" delivers the "hosbam," a sort of sermon in praise of honesty, truth, and purity. This over, he pronounces blessings upon the candidate, throwing over his head the whole of a mixture composed of pieces of cocoa-nut, rice, and almonds. The full ceremony occupies about an hour, and when it is concluded the head of the family gives presents of money to the "dastur" and the other priests according to their rank. After this the assembly disperses.

The boy or girl who has been thus initiated into the Zoroastrian religion is forthwith dressed in new and fine clothes, which are put on over the "sudra." Friends and relatives then hasten to present their gifts in money or dresses to the child and its parents. All

the members of the family and the guests finally partake of a sumptuous feast. In the case of the rich it is usual to give a dinner-party on the same evening, when appropriate toasts are proposed and drunk.

The "sudra," which is always worn next to the skin, is made of fine linen gauze or net, while the "kusti" is a thin woollen cord, or cincture of seventy-two threads; these threads represent the seventy-two "has" or chapters of the sacred book of the Parsis, called *Yazashne*. The "sudra" means "the garment of the good and beneficial way." The "kusti" is passed round the waist three times and tied with four knots, two in front and two behind, during the chanting of a short hymn. At the first knot the person says, "There is only one God, and no other is to be compared with Him;" at the second, "The religion given by Zoroaster is true;" at the third, "Zoroaster is the true Prophet, who derived his mission from God;" and at the fourth and last, "Perform good actions, and abstain from evil ones."

Whether the Parsi religion sanctions proselytism is a question which the learned in that religion have not yet been able to decide; but, as Zoroaster came to convert the godless, the limit of his mission could hardly have been considered the first conversion of the Persian empire to the creed which he preached. It is said that many of the Persian exiles, when they came to India, took to themselves Hindu wives; these

must have been received into the Zoroastrian faith after having performed the ceremony just described. The records of the old Parsi Panchayet contain an instance of a Parsi having, in the year 1818, sought to obtain its sanction to bring up in the Zoroastrian religion his illegitimate daughter by a Hindu concubine. This caused great commotion in the community; but, after considerable discussion, the Panchayet sanctioned the applicant's request. At the same time, however, it resolved that, without its sanction, none other than those begotten of Parsi parents should be invested with the sacred "sudra" and "kusti." Many similar recruits were stealthily admitted into the Zoroastrian religion in after years; but in all these cases the Parsi priest had to be first bought over with gold.

Within the last three years a number of illegitimate Parsi children, begotten of other than Parsi mothers, have been invested with the "sudra" and "kusti" under the auspices of some respectable Parsis, as well as of one of the "dasturs;" but the general voice of the Parsi community being unfavourable to the admission of aliens as members of the Zoroastrian faith, the trustees of the chief fire-temple in Bombay have prohibited these persons from coming within its sacred precincts.

We now come to the most important event in the life of any person, and particularly of the Parsi,—we

mean his marriage. With him it is an event of the greatest rejoicing in which all the families interested partake. The one hope of a Parsi father and mother is to see their sons and daughters suitably married and settled during their lifetime; and when that object is about to be attained rejoicings take place for days, and in some instances for weeks even, before the nuptials.

According to the law of Zoroaster, a boy or girl ought not to be married before the age of fifteen, and this rule must have been observed by the ancient Persians; but among a number of customs which the Parsis in India adopted from the Hindus must unfortunately be included that of early marriages. Hindus are most strictly enjoined by their *shastras* to have their girls married before they have attained the age of nine years, on failure whereof great shame attaches to their parents. This idea of shame appears to have been to some extent participated in by the Parsis, and hence the early marriage of their daughters until recent times. There were other causes also which greatly contributed to create an anxiety among them as to the early marriage of their children. As weddings are legitimate occasions for rejoicings and festivities, most of the wealthy were glad of the opportunities they afforded for the display of their wealth in giving dinners and *natch*-parties on an extensive scale to their relatives, neighbours, friends,

and acquaintances. On the other hand, the women, who on these occasions invite their friends, have the gratification of displaying their jewellery and rich dresses, and so urge on the men to bring about an early consummation of their wish.

Under these circumstances there is little chance of a Parsi gentleman entering the family of his proposed partner in order to win her affections, or of his obtaining a wife of his own personal choice. To those unacquainted with Parsi manners and customs it will perhaps be startling to learn that instances are not wanting of the betrothal of a boy of three years of age to a girl of two. It may seem very ridiculous, but it is nevertheless a fact that less than twenty years ago it was the custom in Bombay, and in some of the cities of Gujarat, to arrange or negotiate for the marriage of children who had not even seen the light of this world; that is to say, if two lady friends were *enceinte*, they would conclude an arrangement that if one should bear a son and the other a daughter, the infants would be united in marriage. This foolish system is, we believe, no longer practised in Bombay; but instances of the kind still occur among the Parsis in some of the villages of Gujarat, where the march of enlightenment has not been as rapid as in the city.

A great change has taken place within the last thirty or forty years. The records of Parsi marri-

ages show that the majority of them were between the ages of fifteen and twenty years, although there are still instances of infant marriages. It was only three years ago that a well-to-do but elderly Parsi priest, who was blessed with several children and grandchildren, desired to complete his happiness, as he thought, by seeing them all married. A day was accordingly fixed for this great event, much to the amusement of the guests, of whom only a very few could have approved of child marriages. The Parsi newspapers raised a cry of indignation when they heard about it, and public condemnation was so unmistakably expressed on this occasion that such marriages are not likely to recur. The feeling of shame which, in common with the Hindus, the Parsis long felt at any failure to marry their children in infancy, has almost disappeared, and it may with some confidence be asserted that ten or twenty years hence early marriages will be among them a thing of the past.

It must, however, be recorded that from the earliest times of the Parsi arrival in India there had not been wanting sensible men who always disapproved of the custom. Among the Zoroastrians in Persia a boy is not married before the age of twenty, nor a girl before the age of fifteen, a practice which must have died out amongst the Indian Zoroastrians through their coming into contact with the Hindus. After the Parsis came to

Bombay, and their numbers increased, many sensible persons among them perceived the absurdity of infant marriages and did all in their power to check the evil, but unfortunately without success. In the year 1777 the Parsi Panchayet issued an edict against the practice, but it remained a dead letter. An instance is recorded of a Parsi watchmaker named Beramji Nasarvanji having in the year 1785 betrothed his son one or two years of age to a daughter of Hormasji Beramji Patel who was only seven weeks old. The Panchayet waxed wroth at this step, and strongly remonstrated with the offenders, as it was contrary to their edict, but their opposition produced little or no effect. They thereupon summoned the whole of the Parsi community to Dadiseth's fire-temple, and with the unanimous consent of the people passed a resolution excommunicating the above-named Parsis, forbidding all laymen from having any intercourse with them as recusant, and prohibiting all priests from performing religious ceremonies at their houses. The excommunicated Parsis, however, were not without friends and supporters, who often opposed the Panchayet in their subsequent measures, and it was this opposition which led the synod to appeal to Government to support their authority.[1]

[1] How this appeal was received by Government will be seen later on in our account of the rise and fall of the Parsi Panchayet.

As a description of the marriage ceremony of the Parsis is likely to be interesting to the European reader, the writer feels that no apology is necessary for his entering minutely into its details. Some of the priests who are well acquainted with a large number of families follow the profession of match-makers. Having made due inquiries into the position of the families possessing marriageable daughters, they go amongst those who have sons wishing to take upon themselves the estate of matrimony, and make it their endeavour to arrange marriages between the two. In a few cases the parents of the boy or girl commission some of these match-making priests to find out a suitable *parti* for their children. The parents or guardians of the boy institute inquiries as to whether the parents of the girl mentioned are respectable persons. On being satisfied of this, the priest's recommendation is favourably received, and direct communication is opened with the parents of the girl by requesting them to lend for a day or two the horoscope or birth-paper of the maiden in order that the astrologer may be consulted as to the eligibility or otherwise of the match. The horoscope of the boy, as well as that of the girl, is then handed over to the professor of astrology in order that he may examine whether the "stars" of the proposed pair are in harmony and whether they are likely to prosper. Much depends on the answer of

this sage. If he does not approve of the match, and augurs that ill will arise from it, negotiations are at once broken off. But if he shows no such apprehension, and goes so far as to predict happiness for the pair, the proposal has advanced one important stage towards its accomplishment. The stars having been declared favourable to the union, the parents of the boy and girl cause further inquiries to be made into each other's means, respectability, position, and connections in the community. The parents of the girl inquire particularly as to the amiability or otherwise of her intended mother-in-law, as in a Parsi family the happiness of the wedded girl depends greatly upon the behaviour of this new relative towards her, the husband being still dependent on his father. When the heads of both families have been satisfied as to the suitability of the match, the betrothal of the young people takes place, the day for the celebration being named by the astrologer. There is no ceremony attending it. The parents of the boy send a present of a dress to the girl, and *vice versâ*. This exchange makes the marriage contract "pucka" or complete, and it cannot then be dissolved. There is no fixed period at which the marriage ceremony should take place. It mainly depends upon the convenience of the parties, but the latest time at which it is performed is, as far as possible, immediately after the girl has arrived at the age of puberty. Instances, however, are not wanting,

as we have before stated, of both the betrothal and the marriage ceremony taking place while the bride and bridegroom are little more than infants.

Certain days in the year are supposed to be propitious for the ceremony, and that is the reason a number of marriages take place on the same day. Several days before the marriage, if the parties are rich, a succession of dinners and "natches" are given to friends, and many thousands of rupees are spent in this manner. It is also customary on such occasions for the parents and kinsmen of the bride and bridegroom to exchange presents of ornaments, rich dresses, or both. To the bride valuable ornaments are presented by her father-in-law. These practices are all very well among those who can afford to incur the expense; but they are extremely injurious to the poorer classes, who often ruin themselves by attempting to imitate their richer neighbours. If their own means are insufficient to bear the expense which they wish to incur, the money-lender is resorted to, and a loan secured at so heavy a premium that the borrower is in consequence frequently embarrassed for the rest of his life.

On the wedding-day large parties are invited by the parents of the bride and bridegroom to witness the nuptial ceremony, which takes place in the evening, after the custom of the Hindus, and according to the promise given to the Rana of Sanjan by the

ancestors of the present Parsis on their landing at that place. The wedding-party in a wealthy family often numbers from one thousand to fifteen hundred persons. The gentlemen are accommodated with chairs and benches in the verandah and along the two sides of the road facing the house where the ceremony is to be performed, while the apartments are gallantly left to the ladies. On this occasion the former dress in "jamas" and "pichori," the full costume of the Parsis, while the latter array themselves in jewellery and dresses of variegated colours richly ornamented with gold.[1]

Shortly before the marriage procession starts a large number of the female friends of the bride go to the bridegroom's place with a present of a rich dress and a ring of gold or diamonds according to her parents' means. All of these are arranged in a rich tray of silver or brass, which is carried by the bride's mother in her right hand. They quickly return after executing this errand, and at or about sunset bouquets of roses or other beautiful and fragrant flowers and small triangular packets of "pan-sopari," *i.e.* betel-

[1] For the benefit of those who have not sufficient accommodation in their houses for the entertainment of large parties, the sons of the late Mr. Edalji Framji Albless erected a building known as Albless Bag, where many marriages and other festivities are celebrated without payment. The Albless family is one of the most highly respected of the Parsi families in Bombay. Its liberality has recently founded an institution, the want of which was much felt, viz. a Lepers' Hospital. It is to be established in Trombay, an island within twenty miles of Bombay.

leaf and nut wrapped in gold leaf, are distributed to each member of the assembly, upon whom also rose-water is sprinkled from a gold or silver jar. After this has been done the whole of the party proceed in due order to the house of the bride. The procession is headed by a European or native band of music according to the means of the parties; the bridegroom, accompanied at his side by the priest who is to perform the marriage ceremony, walks next, and then follow the male portion of the assembly, the female company bringing up the rear. The sight is very imposing. The band plays lively airs; the gentlemen all clad in snow-white "jamas" and "pichoris," and the ladies and maidens in their best dresses, with merry little children on the arms of their well-clad nurses, form a spectacle which is absolutely beautiful of its kind. On reaching the bride's residence the men accompanying the husband take their seats among the male guests of the bride's party, and the ladies go inside the house and assume their places with the others. When the whole party are thus accommodated, nosegays and "biddas," betel-nut packets, are again distributed to the men, and the nuptial ceremony commences soon after sunset. It generally takes place in a hall or a spacious room on the ground-floor of the house where a "galicha" or carpet is spread out.

First of all the bride and the bridegroom are seated

opposite each other on handsome chairs, and then a piece of cloth is held between them as a curtain so as to screen them from each other's sight. Under this curtain they are made to hold each other's right hand in their grasp. Then another piece of cloth is placed round so as to encircle them, and the ends of the cloth are tied together by a double knot. In the same way raw twist is taken and wound round the pair seven times by the officiating priests, who during this performance repeat the short prayers of Yatha Ahu Vairyo. On completing the seventh round, the twist is tied seven times over the joined hands of the couple, as well as round the double knot of the ends of the cloth previously put about them. When this is over incense is burnt on a fire placed in a flat metallic vase, after which the curtain is suddenly dropped down, and the bride and bridegroom, who have each been provided with a few grains of rice, hasten to throw them at one another. This is followed by a clapping of hands from the ladies, who are seated round the bridal pair, and the applause is taken up by the gentlemen outside. After throwing the rice the couple sit side by side, when the recital of "ashirwad" or blessings by two "dasturs" or chief priests follows; one of these stands before the bridegroom and the other before the bride.

Before giving a description of the "ashirwad" ceremony it seems necessary to explain the meaning of

the preliminary ceremony just related. The holding of the curtain between the bride and the bridegroom, and its subsequent removal, are meant to show that up to the time of the ceremony they were separated from each other, but that they are so no longer. Their being made to sit opposite to one another at first and side by side a little later on also expresses the same notion. The grasping of their right hands by each other, and their being tied by a string, signify that they are thenceforth united. The putting round of the string and the cloth, so as to encircle them with a double knot at the ends, means that they are now joined and made one. The object of using raw twist, and of its being put round them seven times, is to show that, while raw twist itself can be very easily broken, when it is strung round seven times and twined into one it forms so strong a band that it cannot be broken by ordinary strength, thus implying that the love and affection of the husband and wife for each other should be so strong that nothing can undo it. The reason for the twist being strung round seven times is because this number is held to be very auspicious among the Parsis, there having been seven Ameshaspends (archangels), seven heavens, and seven continents, known to the ancient Persians. Lastly, the throwing of a few grains of rice upon each other is watched with much interest by the friends and relations of the bride and bridegroom.

A MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

The eyes of all, particularly of the ladies, are upon the pair to see which succeeds in first throwing the rice as soon as the curtain is withdrawn. The one who is successful is supposed to evince the more love and affection of the two.

On the conclusion of this the senior "dastur" begins the more solemn part of the marriage ceremony, and pronounces the following blessings:—"May the omniscient Lord bless you with many sons and grandsons, with good livelihood, heart-ravishing friendship, long life, and an existence of one hundred and fifty years!"

Two men are seated near the couple, one by the side of the boy and one by the side of the girl, as representing their parents or guardians. The officiating priests ask them whether the marriage receives their consent. The person representing the father of the bridegroom is first asked the following question: "In the presence of this assemblage which has gathered here in this town, the priest specifying the day, month, and year of Emperor Yazdezard the king of the Sassanian dynasty of auspicious Iran, say whether you have consented according to the rules and customs of the Mazdayasnan religion to take this bride in marriage for this bridegroom on a promise of paying her two thousand 'derams' of pure white silver and two 'denars' of red gold (of the coinage) of the city of Nishapore?"

Answer: "Yes, I have consented."

The representative of the father of the bride is then asked, "Have you promised to give for ever this girl of your family in marriage to (naming the husband) with honest thoughts, good words, and for the increase of goodness?"

Answer: "Yes, I have promised."

The following question is then put to those about to be married:—"Have you both consented to act according to your promise with honest heart till the end of your lives?"

Answer: "Yes, we have."

After these interrogatories and answers both the "dasturs" or priests deliver to the husband and wife, as we may now call them, a short address containing good, sound, and practical advice, which if attended to would greatly benefit the bridegroom through his career in life in all its different aspects, whether social, political, or commercial. The names of some of the departed worthies of ancient Persia are mentioned, whose example they are advised to follow. We give below the text, which will be read with interest.

By the helping name of Ahura Mazda may your happiness increase.

May you be brilliant.

Try to do good deeds.

Be increasing.

Be victorious.

Learn to do deeds of piety.

Be worthy to do good deeds.
Think of nothing but the truth.
Speak nothing but the truth.
Do nothing but what is proper.
Shun all bad thoughts.
Shun all bad words.
Shun all bad actions.
Praise deeds of piety.
Commit no acts opposed to piety.
Praise the Mazdayasnan religion.
Do nothing without mature consideration.
Acquire wealth by good means.
Say what is true before your superiors, and act according to their orders.
Be courteous, sweet-tongued, and kind towards your friends.
Do not indulge in scandals.
Avoid being angry.
Do not commit sins for the sake of avoiding shame.
Do not be ambitious.
Do not torment others.
Do not entertain wicked jealousy.
Do not be naughty.
Avoid evil thoughts.
Avoid evil passions (revenge).
Deprive not others of their property.
Keep away from the wives of others.
Be industrious in following good professions.
Do good to the pious and to the virtuous.
Do not quarrel with the revengeful.
Never be a partner with an ambitious man.
Do not become a companion of a backbiter or a scandal-monger.
Do not join the company of persons of ill fame.
Do not co-operate with the ill informed.
Fight with your enemies only by fair means.
Treat your friends in a way agreeable to them.
Do not enter into any discussion with persons of ill fame.
Speak in an assembly after great consideration.
Speak with moderation in the presence of kings.

Preserve the good name of your father.
In no way annoy your mother.
Keep yourselves pure by means of truth.
Be immortal like Kaikhosru.
Be well informed like Kaus.
Be as brilliant as the sun.
Be as pure as the moon.
Be as illustrious as Zarthoshtra.
Be as strong as Rustam.
Be as fertile as the earth.
As soul is united with the body so be you united, friendly with your friends, brothers, wife, and children.
Always keep good faith, and preserve a good character.
Recognise only Ahura Mazda, the Omniscient Lord, as your God.
Praise Zoroaster as your spiritual leader.
Treat Ahreman, the evil spirit, with contempt.

After this follows an earnest supplication to the Almighty to bestow upon the newly-married pair good moral and social qualities. In this prayer are recited the names of the thirty angels after whom the thirty days of a Parsi month are called, and who are supposed to be guardian spirits presiding over the good qualities enumerated.

Beginning with Ahura Mazda, the first day of the month, the priests say :—

"May Ahura Mazda bestow upon you
Good thoughts through Behman,
Good words through Ardibehesht,
Good actions through Shehrivar,
Perfect thought through Spendarmad,
Sweetness through Khordad,
Fruitfulness through Amerdad.
May God (Depadar) bestow upon you

Increasing lustre through Adar,
Purity through Aban, or Avan,
Exalted position through Khurshed,
Increase through the cow-like Mohor,
Liberality through Tir,
Temperate habits through Gosh.
May God Depmehr bestow upon you
Pure justice through Mehr,
Obedience through Srosh,
Fruitfulness through Rashnu,
Increase of strength through Fravardin,
Victory through Behram,
Constant delight through Ram,
Strong power through Goad.
May God Depdin bestow upon you
Knowledge through Din,
Collection of wealth through Arshisang,
A number of good talents through Ashtad,
Great activity through Asman,
Firmness of place through Jamyad,
Good sight through Marespand, and
Nourishment of body through Aneran."

All this is spoken by the "dastur" in the Pazand language, which, after the Pehlevi, was the current language of Persia, and which was very commonly spoken in the latter days of the Sassanian dynasty. It is very like the Persian language. When this is finished some blessings are recited in the language of the Avesta itself. These consist of a few passages from the latter part of the "Yasna." They run as follows :—

Oh you good man! May that come to you which is still better for you than the good, since you fit yourself worthy as a "zaota" (a pious and virtuous man). May you receive the reward

which is earned by the zaota as one who thinks, speaks, and does much good.

May that come to you which is better than the good. May that not come to you which is worse than the evil.

Oh good man! May that accrue to you which is better than the good.

May your relations be worthy of goodness.

May you get that reward of which you have made yourself worthy.

May good accrue to you as the result of perfect good thought, perfect good words, and perfect good actions.

May that piety come to you which is better than the good.

May not that sinful life which is worse than the evil come to you.

May it be so as I pray.

May the much desired Agriaman come for joy to the good mind of Zoroastrian men and women. May he grant the reward to be desired according to the law of all purities.

I prefer that purity which is considered the best by Ahura Mazda.

Lastly follow some blessings in the Pazand language, wherein are mentioned the names of the departed kings and heroes of the Kayanian dynasty of Persia. The priests call upon the couple to imitate those qualities which have made these men famous. They also name the principal objects of the creation, such as the sun, moon, etc., and the wish is expressed that the pair may possess the attributes which those planets are supposed to represent.

Then follows a repetition of a part of these blessings and the accompanying advice in the Sanscrit language. This is done because the Parsis who first emigrated to India after the defeat of the Persians

under their last king Yazdezard promised the Rana of Sanjan, on whose shores they landed, that such a course would be observed.

The whole is brought to a conclusion with the recital of "Tandarusti," *i.e.* a blessing invoking the bestowal of physical strength, energy, and health on the newly-married pair. After the conclusion of these ceremonies the bride and the bridegroom, or, if they are minors, their fathers or guardians, together with the two persons who represent the fathers or guardians, and the two officiating priests, sign a marriage certificate, which is afterwards registered at the office of the Registrar of Parsi marriages.

When the ceremony has been thus concluded the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, retires to his own house, where they all sit down to a banquet. The bride's party are entertained by her father. The ladies are first served, and when they have left the table it is prepared for the gentlemen. The Parsis, from their earliest sojourn in India, have refrained from eating meat on the day of marriage to avoid giving offence to the feelings of the Hindus, as a number of sheep would require to be killed for so large a party. The viands, therefore, consist of fish, vegetables, sweetmeats, fruits, preserves, and similar articles. European and native wines are drunk freely, and several toasts are proposed by the company, including the health of the wedded pair, their parents,

and the chief men of the assembly. We must not omit to mention one toast that is always drunk on such occasions, viz. the health of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen of England and Empress of India, and the Royal family, which is always received with enthusiasm and drunk amidst deafening cheers.

After dinner the ladies retire to their own houses, but the gentlemen sit till a late hour enjoying the pleasures of a "natch" or of the band that follows. A repetition of the nuptial benediction is also performed by the priests after midnight before a few select friends and relatives.

Such are the ceremonies attending a Parsi marriage, but we are glad to notice that the better ideas which prevail in the present day, as well as greater intercourse with Europeans, have considerably modified the nature of the festival, which has lost, in a great measure, the purely Eastern features that formerly characterised it. Possibly it has also lost in consequence much of its splendour; but it has become more in accordance with the enlightened views which the Parsis have displayed under Western influence. The long processions, headed by discordant native music, the gaily-caparisoned steeds, the boys dressed in military uniform, and the little girls in European garb, together with the silver-plated palanquins and other semi-barbarous customs, have almost entirely disappeared owing to increased civil-

isation, and thus the marriage ceremonials have been invested with an infinitely more sober and more rational air.

As the couple are invariably young, separate accommodation is seldom allotted them after their marriage, nor even when they have attained adult age do they leave the parental roof. They live in the same house with the other members of the family. Though a father has six or seven sons they all reside with their wives and children in the house of their sire, and the gray-headed old man is often able to look with pride and pleasure upon the group of children and grandchildren around him. Europeans in Bombay have often seen wealthy Parsis driving in their spacious open carriages of an evening with half a dozen little ones beside them, and others following. There are, of course, instances where sons have left their father's roof and taken separate houses for themselves and their families, and of brothers who, after the death of their parents, have separated from each other. This, however, is not owing to the same ideas which prompt Europeans to live apart after marriage. Domestic quarrels among the wives of brothers, or with the mother-in-law, are generally the cause of separation in these exceptional cases.

It may, perhaps, not be out of place if we now describe the marriage ceremony as it is performed by the Zoroastrians in Persia. It is much simpler than

among their Indian co-religionists. On the wedding-day a number of male relations and friends of the bridegroom go to the house of the bride, where, on arrival, they are regaled with sweetmeats and sherbet. One of the elders of the bridegroom's party asks the girl whether she is willing to accept as her husband the man who has been selected by the respective families. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, the bridegroom's party, along with that of the bride, return to the former's house. After they are all seated, a priest stands before the bridegroom and advises him in the Dari[1] language. The bride sits apart with the other ladies at some distance from the men, so that she does not hear the advice given him, which is to this effect:—"Follow the commandments of the Lord God and His prophet Zoroaster; pray to the Almighty three times a day; participate in all the 'Gahambars' and other 'Jasans' (festivals); fulfil your duties towards your parents and your tutor; appoint an angel, a 'dastur,' and a wise man as your guardians; do good to mankind; keep peace with all men; follow the path of righteousness, for righteousness alone secures the fulfilment of all your hopes; be humble and of good behaviour; hurt nobody; do not be envious of any one; do not look with contempt upon your poor relations; on the contrary, help them as far as it lies in your power; in all

[1] A mixture of Pehlevi and the ancient Persian.

your actions seek the advice of wise men, and in all things trust in God, and always thank Him for His mercies."

The officiating priest then recites certain prayers of repentance for sins, praising Ahura Mazda the Almighty God for His just acts and commandments, and invoking His blessings upon all on earth. After these prayers the priest asks the father of the girl whether he has consented to give his daughter to the man proposed. On receiving the answer, he asks the bridegroom whether he has agreed to take the young woman for his wife. The bridegroom having answered in the affirmative, he and the bride join hands, and walk round a blazing fire three times. This completes the ceremony, and, after partaking of a sumptuous dinner, the parties separate. The girl then goes to live with her husband. The Persian Zoroastrians do not, as already stated, give their children in marriage till the boy has attained the age of twenty and the girl that of fifteen.

It is gratifying to know that the Parsis have not followed the Hindus in the cruel custom of prohibiting their widows from re-marrying, a tyranny which is sometimes followed by so much sin and mischief. Notwithstanding this permission, there are very few Parsi widows who marry again; and if they do so, it is generally before they have arrived at the age of forty. In the case of those who have reached this

age, particularly if they are blessed with children and have sufficient means to provide for them, they as a rule retain their state of widowhood.

We now proceed to describe the ceremonies attending the death of a Parsi. When the case is seen to be hopeless, the body of the dying man is washed and dressed in clean clothes. The "dastur" or the "mobed," with other priests, repeats sundry texts of the Zend Avesta, the substance of which tends to afford consolation to the dying man, and he breathes a prayer on his behalf for the forgiveness of his sins:—"May the Almighty pardon you for anything that you may have done against His will, His commandments, and the dictates of the true religion of Zoroaster. May the merciful Lord give you a good and happy abode in the world to which you are about to enter, and may He have mercy on you."

If the dying man be in possession of his senses he himself joins in these exercises; if not, his son, or nearest relative, or the family priest, bends over him, repeating the words in his ears. When life becomes extinct the body is wrapped in clean clothes and placed on an oblong piece of polished stone, which is laid on the floor.[1] The female members and relations

[1] The hands are laid crosswise and joined upon the chest, and the feet are crossed and tied, or are kept straight. At one time there was a sharp contention among the priests whether the feet should be crossed or kept straight, but the Parsi Panchayet of old decided that this may be done in any way the head of the family of the dead man may direct.

of the family then sit down together on a carpet spread in the room in which the body is placed, the men sitting on chairs or benches in the verandah. If death takes place at night, the body is kept in the house till the next morning, but if during the day—four or five hours before sunset—it is removed to its final resting-place in the afternoon. Until the last funeral ceremony, described hereafter, has been performed, a priest continues saying certain prayers before the corpse, burning sandal-wood over a fire all the time.

When the time for the removal of the body approaches, it is placed upon an iron bier which is brought in by the corpse-bearers. Two priests then stand facing the corpse, and recite the seven "has," called "Ahunavaiti Gatha." These "has" contain no special reference to the dead; but their recital is intended as a sermon upon our transient life in this world addressed to those who attend the funeral, and upon the benefits accruing from leading a life of morality and virtue; indeed, that to do so is the surest, if not the only, way of enjoying happiness in the next world. The priesthood of the present day are unable to explain why this sermon is recited before the dead body instead of being preached directly to the persons attending the funeral; but it is believed that the recital of the Gatha, originally composed by the Prophet himself, is sufficient to destroy any evil influ-

ences that may affect the soul of the departed. In the tenth "pargarad" of the Vendidad, an ancient religious work of the Parsis, Zoroaster is said to have asked God, "How shall I combat the Drukhsh which flies from the dead upon the living? How shall I subdue the Nasush which defiles the living from the dead?" The answer of God (Ahura Mazda) was, "Speak the words which are in the Gathas;" and this is most probably the reason why these "has" are repeated before the dead body. Of this we are certain that its recital was not introduced in later times, because it is enjoined in some of the earliest religious books as being the most ancient Avesta composition.

The Ahunavaiti Gatha, which is recited before the dead body, as above explained, is the first of the five Gathas ascribed to Zoroaster. It is a metrical composition, to be recited in a chanting tone, and is divided into seven "has" (chapters), which contain one hundred and one verses, each consisting of three lines, and each line having sixteen syllables. It contains "short prayers, songs, and hymns, which generally express philosophical and abstract thoughts about metaphysical subjects." The first "ha" contains a short prayer imploring God to bestow right-mindedness and piety, which are essential for the good of man, in both the corporeal and the spiritual world.

The second "ha" is a mystical and allegorical de-

scription of the order of Ahura Mazda to cultivate the earth, because, as expressed elsewhere in the Avesta, cultivation entails health and prosperity, and hence mental strength, which latter, in its turn, leads to purity and piety.

The third "ha" is a sermon by Zoroaster himself upon the evils of polytheism and the advantage of worshipping only one God. "The chief tendency of this speech," says Dr. Haug, "is to induce his countrymen to forsake the worship of the devs or gods, *i.e.* polytheism, to bow only before Ahura Mazda, and to separate themselves entirely from the idolaters. In order to gain the object wished for he propounds the great difference which exists between the two religions, Monotheism and Polytheism, showing that whereas the former is the fountain of all prosperity, both in this and the other life, the latter is utterly ruinous to mankind."

The fourth "ha" shows how the good creation should be protected from the influence of the evil and the wicked.

The fifth "ha" condemns idolatry and exposes the evils which result from its practice.

The sixth "ha" speaks of cultivation as the best means of supporting piety, and depicts a conflict between the good and the evil.

The seventh and last "ha" says that all moral

and physical good results from pious thoughts, words, and actions.

When this recital is finished the dead body is taken out of the house[1] on the bier, and carried on the shoulders of "nasesalars" or corpse-bearers to the "dokhma" or tower of silence, which is generally erected in a solitary place and upon an eminence. The relatives of the departed one naturally give way to cries and lamentations. The male relatives and friends of the deceased follow the dead body in funeral procession on foot. After the dead body is removed from the house cow's urine is thrown as a disinfectant on the spot where it had lain, as well as on the path by which the corpse was taken out. Arrived at its resting-place, the iron bier is put upon the ground, the face of the deceased is uncovered for a few minutes in order that a last look may be taken of it, and the whole assembly bow before it. After a few minutes the body is carried by the bearers into the "dokhma," and the vultures which are always in its immediate vicinity soon denude it of flesh.

There is one point in connection with the ceremonies performed over a dead body about which

[1] In Persia the Zoroastrians do not keep the body after life is extinct in the dwelling-house. It is removed to a building which may be called the morgue, and the recitation of the "has" is made there, after which the body is taken direct to the "dokhma."

people of other religious persuasions entertain most incorrect ideas. The face of a deceased Zoroastrian is exposed to the gaze of a dog three or four times during the recitation of the funeral sermon or oration. This seems to have led to the erroneous supposition, caused doubtless through ignorance, that before the dead body is removed from the house a dog is made to lick it or to eat some portion of its flesh. It is scarcely necessary to say that this belief has no foundation whatever. The exact object and meaning of the ceremony has not been properly ascertained; but, according to common belief, dogs are considered sacred animals. They are supposed to guide the souls of the dead towards heaven, and to ward off on their way the bad influence of evil spirits to which they may be exposed. This belief, however, is not generally shared in by the educated Parsis of the present day.

Another supposition also prevails on the subject to the effect that the eyes of a particular kind of dog possess peculiar magnetic power in annihilating impurities surrounding a dead body. This theory is referred to at page 240 of Dr. Haug's *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, edited by Dr. West. He says:—

"A man who touches a dead body, the contagious impurity of which has not been previously checked by holding towards the corpse a peculiar kind of dog, is said to be at once visited by a spectre representing death itself; this is called 'drukhsh nasush,' or the destructive corruption."

The dog is also thus described by the same writer :—

"It is called the 'four-eyed dog,' a yellow spot on each side of its eyelids being considered an additional eye. He has yellow ears, and the colour of the rest of his body varies from yellow to white. To his eyes *a kind of magnetic influence is ascribed.*"

We return to the funeral ceremony. When the corpse-bearers take the body into the "dokhma," the priests, relatives, and friends who have attended the funeral wash their faces and hands and offer a prayer to the Almighty.

On the death of any person his friends, neighbours, and acquaintances visit the relatives of the deceased every morning and evening for three days consecutively to offer consolation to them, and they sit in long array for a few minutes on benches and chairs placed alongside the house.

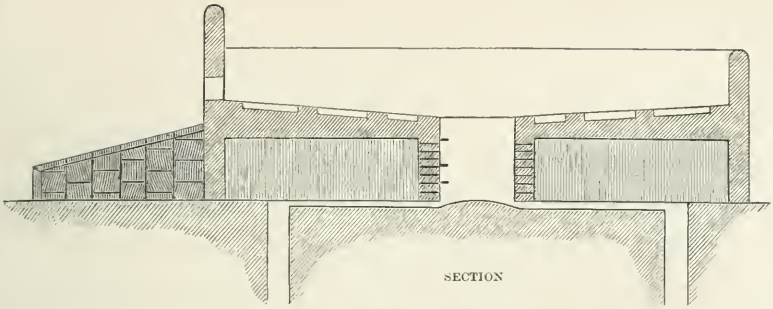
The Pársi Scriptures declare that the soul does not leave this world for three days, and therefore a priest prays constantly during that period before a burning fire fed with sandal-wood near the spot where the dead body was laid. On the morning of the fourth day the soul is believed to enter the other world, and therefore a religious ceremony is performed, either at the house of the deceased or at a fire-temple on the afternoon of the third day as well as just before the dawn of the fourth day, in the presence of the priests, friends and relatives of the deceased. This is

called the "uthamna" ceremony, when the relatives of the deceased, if rich, give sums of money in charity according to their means for the benefit of the soul of the deceased. The deceased, if wealthy, has often bequeathed large sums for charitable purposes in his will, and these bequests are announced to the public at the "uthamna" ceremony. The Parsi charitable funds in charge of the Parsi Panchayet are largely increased by contributions of this kind. On the fourth day succeeding the death a number of priests, and the lame, halt, and blind living in the Parsi benevolent asylums, are fed as an act of charity intended to benefit the soul of the deceased. For three or ten days after death, as may be either convenient or the custom of the family, the female relatives sit on a carpet spread upon the ground-floor near the spot where the dead body had been, and receive visits from their female friends and connections.

While treating upon this subject a description of a Parsi tower of silence will doubtless be considered of interest. The best idea that we can give to our European readers of its outward appearance is to refer them to the large circular gasometers attached to gasworks, the only difference being that the "dokhmas" are open at the top, while their circular walls are built of the hardest stone, faced with white "chunam" or lime plaster. The walls are from

twenty to thirty feet high, and the diameter of the largest "dokhma" in Bombay is ninety feet.

We give in this work a plan of the interior of a tower of silence. Inside the tower is a circular platform about three hundred feet in circumference, and entirely paved with large stone slabs, and divided into three rows of exposed receptacles called "pavis" for the bodies of the dead. As there are the same number of "pavis" in each concentric row they diminish in size from the outer to the inner ring, and that by the side of the wall is used for the bodies of males, the next for those of females, and the third for those of children. These receptacles or "pavis" are separated from each other by ridges called "dandas," which are about an inch in height above the level of the "pavis," and channels are cut into the "pavis" for the purpose of conveying all the liquid matter flowing from the corpses, and rain-water, into a "bhandar," or a deep hollow in the form of a pit, the bottom of which is paved with stone slabs. This pit forms the centre of the tower. When the corpse has been completely stripped of its flesh by the vultures, which is generally accomplished within one hour at the outside, and when the bones of the denuded skeleton are perfectly dried up by the powerful heat of a tropical sun, and other atmospheric influences, they are thrown into this pit, where they crumble into dust—the rich and the poor thus meet-



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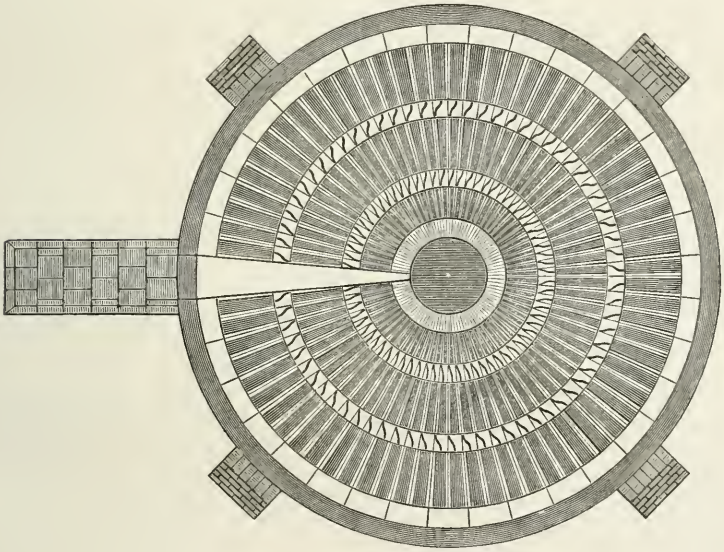
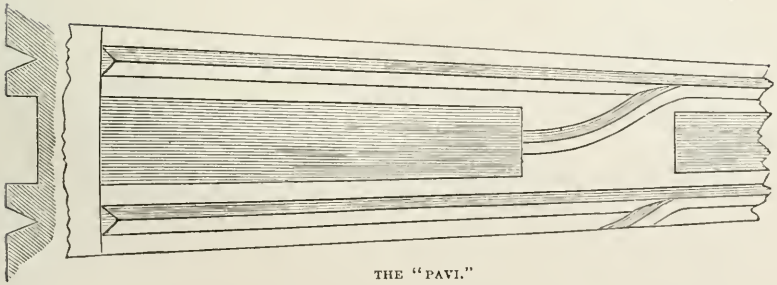


VIEW OF THE INTERIOR.



THE "PAVI."

PLAN OF A TOWER OF SILENCE.

ing together after death in one common level of equality. Four drains are constructed leading from the body of the pit. They commence from the surrounding wall of the "bhandar" and pass beyond the outside of the tower down into four wells sunk in the ground at equal distances. At the mouth of each drain charcoal and sandstones are placed for purifying the fluid before it enters the ground, thus observing one of the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion that "the mother earth shall not be defiled." The wells have a permeable bottom, which is covered with sand to a height of five or seven feet. These "dokhmas" or towers of silence are built upon one plan, but their size may and does vary.[1]

The laying of the foundation-stone of a new "dokhma," as well as its final consecration, is

[1] Mr. Nasarvanji Chandabhai gives the several dimensions of Mr. Nasarvanji Ratanji Tata's "dokhma" at Navsari as follows:—The interior diameter of the tower, as limited by the parapet, is 62 feet; the outermost diameter is 70 feet; the outer diameter of the plinth at the surface of the ground, 66·8; the frustrum or the plinth has a batter of 1 foot in 8 feet; the diameter of the "bhandar" is 20 feet 6 inches; the depth of the "bhandar" at its centre 8 feet; the thickness of the parapet 1 foot; its height above plinth 8 feet; height of plinth above the surface of ground 8 feet; minimum height of the tower above ground 16 feet; and the maximum 22 feet. The area of the interior of the tower is 3,019 square feet. The diameter of each well is 6 feet; the depth of ditto 35 feet. The aggregate capacity of the four wells is 21,136 gallons; the gathering area of the wells is 3,117 square feet; the quantity of rain-water from a continued fall of 12 inches, say in one day, would be 3,117 cubic feet, or 19,419 gallons.

attended with great ceremony, of which we now propose to give a short account. The former is called the "tana" ceremony, from the fact of the "tana" or thread being used in it. When a plot of ground is selected for the building of a "dokhma," it is marked out by fixing large iron nails at certain intervals forming a circle, and then thread is taken round them so as to show the space that will be covered by the "dokhma." The Zoroastrian Scriptures are, as we have already said, opposed to burying the dead, the practice being considered most injurious to the health of the living. When the Parsis begin to build a "dokhma," they know that some part of the earth must necessarily come into contact with the bodies of the dead, and therefore, as a precautionary measure, they fix nails in the ground and enclose it by thread, indicating thereby that only that particular portion of the ground should be set apart for the dead. That this is the view taken of the proceeding appears from the "baj" prayers and ceremonies being always performed by a priest on the spot previous to laying the foundation of the "dokhma." The first "baj" prayer is in honour of Srosh, the guardian deity presiding over the souls of the dead, especially during the first three days after death. The second is in honour of Ahura Mazda Himself. The third is in honour of Spendarmad, the guardian deity presiding over "earth." The fourth

is in honour of Ardafrosh, *i.e.* the departed souls; and the fifth is in honour of the seven Ameshaspends, *i.e.* the archangels. These five "baj" ceremonies and prayers are supplications to the Almighty to the following effect:—"O Almighty (Ahura Mazda), though it is wrong to contaminate the ground with the bodies of the dead, we beseech Thee to permit us to occupy this enclosed piece of ground (Spendarmad), and no more, for laying the bodies of departed souls who, in obedience to Thy order, leave this world for the next." It is with this object that the "tana" ceremony is performed. In carrying the thread round the nails care is taken that it does not touch the ground, which is intended to show that the bodies of the dead should not be placed directly on the earth, but on some superstructure. Then, again, iron nails are used, and not wooden pegs as in ordinary buildings, because of the religious prohibition against wood in anything connected with the dead, it being more porous than metal, and more likely to carry contagion from their bodies.

The ceremonies and prayers in connection with the consecration of the "dokhma" occupy four days. First of all, the structure is separated from the adjoining ground by digging all round it a "pavi" (a kind of trench) about half a foot deep and the same in width. Then in the centre of the "dokhma," that is, in the "bhandar," two priests perform the

Yasna and the Vendidad prayers and ceremonies in honour of Srosh for three consecutive mornings and nights. On the morning of the fourth day a Yasna prayer is repeated in honour of Ahura Mazda. After that these priests say four "baj" prayers in honour of Ahura Mazda, Spendarmad, Srosh, and Ardafrosh. These ceremonies are performed in the tower itself. Afterwards in a pavilion erected outside the "dokhma" a Jasan ceremony is held, in which a large number of priests and laymen take part. This consists of "afringan" prayers, of which we shall speak more fully in the chapters on Religion. In connection with these prayers the name of the donor —*i.e.* of the gentleman or lady at whose expense the tower has been built—is publicly mentioned by the officiating priest, and all the assembled priests join in beseeching blessings upon the founder. During the celebration of the Jasan ceremonies, and after its completion, the "dokhma" is visited by thousands of Parsi men, women, and children, who all throw into the "bhandar," according to their means, silver and copper coins; some even throw in their gold rings and petty ornaments. This they do as contributing their mite towards the expenses of building their last resting-place. If the "dokhma" is built by public subscription, the collection, which sometimes amounts to thousands of rupees, goes in aid of the work, but if it is built at the expense of one or two individuals, it

is handed to the head priest of the district in whose jurisdiction it is situated.

The Parsis consider it an act of piety to attend and to take part in these ceremonials. Whenever, therefore, these occur they flock to them in large numbers, giving the place where they are held the appearance of a great fair or holiday. The person who causes a "dokhma" to be built at his own expense is considered to have performed one of the most meritorious of religious actions. Before the "dokhma" is consecrated it is opened to the inspection of all, but afterwards[1] it is rigidly closed to every person, whether they be Zoroastrians or non-Zoroastrians. The brief opportunity of visiting these

[1] In the year 1792 a European resident of Bombay secretly climbed up the wall of a tower of silence in that city and looked into it. The feelings of the Parsis were greatly outraged by this act, and they complained of this sacrilege to the Governor in Council at Bombay, who issued the following proclamation :—

"A Proclamation.

"Whereas it has been represented to Government by the Caste of Parsis that a European Inhabitant of this Island, unobservant of that decency which enlightened people show to the religious ceremonies of the Natives of India, had lately entered one of the repositories for their dead, to the great distress, inconvenience, and expense of the said Caste ; the Acting President in Council has thought fit to reprimand the person alluded to for his improper conduct ; and in order to mark in the strongest manner his discountenance of such unwarrantable proceedings, and to deter others from the commission of like indignities in future, he hereby causes it to be signified, that whoever shall obtrude themselves on the Temples, Tombs, or religious ceremonies of the Natives, residing under the protection of this Government, will be suspended the Honourable Company's service, if in their

solemn edifices is therefore freely taken advantage of by all races. In the year 1878 a new "dokhma" was built at Navsari by Mr. Nasarvanji Ratanji Tata,[1] a wealthy and generous Parsi gentleman of Bombay, who claims the former town as his birthplace. Sir Richard Temple, at that time Governor of Bombay, went by Mr. Nasarvanji's invitation to see the "dokhma," and the Parsi engineer, Mr. Nasarvanji Chandabhai, under whose supervision it had been constructed, described and explained to him on the spot its internal arrangements. Sir Richard Temple expressed himself as being much pleased with the sanitary precautions which were adopted by the Parsis in their method for the disposal of the dead.

To any other persons than Parsis this mode of disposing of dead bodies, namely, by allowing vultures to devour them, seems revolting, but usage from time immemorial has not only reconciled the most sensitive Parsi to it, but has led him to think that it is the best that could be adopted under all

employ, or if free merchants, mariners, or others, be adjudged to have forfeited their licences, and will be sent to Europe.

By order of the Acting
President in Council,
(Signed) WILLIAM PAGE, *Secretary.*

BOMBAY CASTLE,
29*th February* 1792."

[1] This gentleman has recently built at a cost of Rs.65,000 an "agiary" or fire-temple for the use of the Zoroastrians at Bandora, a town ten miles from Bombay.

the circumstances of the case. Cremation, doubtless, is the best of all existing methods, but according to the law of Zoroaster it is sinful to pollute fire with such an unclean thing as a dead body. The answer of the Parsis to other races when they express their abhorrence of this practice is the same as was given by Mr. Nasarvanji Beramji, the Secretary to the Parsi Panchayet, to Mr. Monier Williams, Professor of Sanscrit in the University of Oxford, when that learned gentleman went to see the tower of silence on Malabar Hill at Bombay during his first visit to India. Professor Monier Williams asked him how it was possible to become reconciled to such a usage, and he received the following answer:—

"Our Prophet, Zoroaster, who lived three thousand years ago, taught us to regard the elements as symbols of the Deity. Earth, fire, water, he said, ought never, under any circumstances, to be defiled by contact with putrefying flesh. Naked, he said, we came into the world, and naked we ought to leave it. But the decaying particles of our bodies should be dissipated as rapidly as possible, and in such a way that neither Mother Earth, nor the beings she supports, should be contaminated in the slightest degree. In fact, our Prophet was the greatest of health officers, and, following his sanitary laws, we build our towers on the tops of the hills, above all human habitations. We spare no expense in constructing them of the hardest materials, and we expose our putrescent bodies in open stone receptacles, resting on fourteen feet of solid granite, not necessarily to be consumed by vultures, but to be dissipated in the speediest possible manner, and without the possibility of polluting the earth or contaminating a single living being dwelling thereon. God, indeed, sends the vultures, and, as a matter of fact, these birds do their appointed work much more expeditiously than millions

of insects would do if we committed our bodies to the ground. In a sanitary point of view, nothing can be more perfect than our plan. Even the rain-water which washes our skeletons is conducted by channels into purifying charcoal. Here in these five towers rest the bones of all the Parsis that have lived in Bombay for the last two hundred years. We form a united body in life, and we are united in death."

The effect produced upon Professor Monier Williams's mind after hearing the above observations is thus described by himself in a letter published in the *Times*. He says therein :

"I could not help thinking that, however much such a system may shock our European feelings and ideas, yet our own method of interment, if regarded from a Parsi point of view, may possibly be equally revolting to Parsi sensibilities. The exposure of the decaying body to the assaults of innumerable worms may have no terrors for us, because our survivors do not see the assailants ; but let it be borne in mind that neither are the Parsi survivors permitted to look at the swoop of the heaven-sent birds. Why, then, should we be surprised if they prefer the more rapid to the more lingering operation ? and which of the two systems, they may reasonably ask, is more defensible on sanitary grounds ?"

Professor Monier Williams visited the "dokhmas" a second time in the same year, and communicated his views to the Parsi Panchayet in the following terms :—

"On Friday, 10th November 1876, I had the pleasure of a second visit to the towers of silence. I had already expressed my opinion in a letter published in the London *Times* of the 28th January 1876, as to the excellent arrangements connected with the place set apart by the Parsis for the exposure of their dead. My second visit has confirmed me in my opinion that the Parsi method of disposing of dead bodies is as perfect as anything can

be in a sanitary point of view. There is no spot in Bombay where the breezes appear so healthful as in the beautiful gardens which surround the towers. Nothing during all my travels throughout India, from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, has instructed me more than my two visits to the Parsi towers of silence."

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales when in Bombay was pleased, in company with His Grace the Duke of Sutherland and Dr. W. H. Russell, to visit the "dokhmas" on Malabar Hill.[1]

[1] "The Prince of Wales and his party were received at the steps by Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai, who led them up to the arched gateway of the compound. Here they were met by Mr. Nasarvanji Beramji, the Secretary of the Parsi Panchayet. Mr. Nasarvanji led the party farther up into the compound by the main road, pointing out to His Royal Highness four of the towers, from a distance. It was stated to His Royal Highness that one of the towers, known as the Modi's Tower, was built as far back as two centuries ago. Arriving at the fifth and largest tower, the nearest to the western portion of the compound wall, the royal party halted near a table on which was placed a model of a tower of silence. Mr. Nasarvanji minutely explained to His Royal Highness, by means of the model, the internal construction and arrangements of a tower, pointing out the several oblong stone receptacles for depositing the dead bodies, as well as the footpaths by which, without touching the remains of dead bodies previously exposed, the corpse-bearers reached each receptacle. He then explained how each body was consumed or dismembered, at the same time describing the tenets and principles of the Zoroastrian religion in connection with the disposal of the dead. In the model was shown a pit, as to the special use of which His Royal Highness made particular inquiry. It was explained that the bones collected from the receptacles were thrown into that pit, where they were reduced to atoms by atmospheric influences. It was further stated that, after the bones were reduced to atoms, there remained in the pit nothing but lime and phosphorus, which were in no degree offensive or injurious to health. His Royal Highness spoke in approbation of the sanitary precautions adopted in this method for the disposal of the dead. The royal party, led by Sir Jamshedji, then turned into the neatly laid out garden, and next

The internal arrangement of the "dokhma" and the method employed by the Parsis in the disposal of their dead were explained to His Royal Highness by the Secretary to the Parsi Panchayet, and His Royal Highness was pleased to express his approbation of the sanitary precautions adopted in the mode of Parsi sepulture.

As a deceased Parsi is neither buried in the earth

to the 'sagris,' where the Parsis accompanying funeral parties stand and offer up their prayers for the dead. One compartment of the 'sagri,' where the sacred fire is kept burning from time immemorial, was shown from a distance to His Royal Highness, who was then led up a flight of stone steps into the other compartment, and thence into an open raised verandah, which, it is supposed, affords the best panoramic view of the town and island of Bombay. From this spot His Royal Highness's eye was directed, on the south-western side, to the Prongs Lighthouse, and on the north-east to the Sion Fort, the Kurla Hill, etc. Beyond these were seen the stately vessels riding in the harbour, the Karanja Island, Butcher Island, the Elephanta Caves Hill, Matheran Hill, and the Syadri Mountains in the far east. Beneath His Royal Highness's feet lay the cocoanut-tree plantations of Chaupati, Gamdevi, and Girgam. Farther on were seen the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Sir Kavasji Jehangir College Buildings, the Byculla Club, the Jamshedji Hospital, and again, on the right hand, the Post Offices, the Public Works Offices, the University Clock Tower, the Secretariat, and other edifices in Frere Town. His Royal Highness remarked that the view, both by the naked eye and by means of a pair of field-glasses which were handed him by Sir Jamshedji, was admirable, and that he never could have expected to get such a bird's-eye view of Bombay and its surroundings as he had obtained from that spot. His Highness expressed himself exceedingly pleased with what he saw, and thanked Sir Jamshedji for the opportunity given him of seeing the towers of silence properly, and Mr. Nasarvanji for the information and explanations given by him. Sir Jamshedji then led the royal party down the steps, where the Prince cordially shook hands with him and drove to Malabar Hill."—*Bombay Gazette*, 18th November 1875.

nor burned in fire, but simply exposed in towers of silence which are not closed at the top, he can escape from the tower if by any chance life should be restored after the body has been laid within it. We are not aware of any such case having ever occurred, although reports to that effect have at times been falsely circulated, but no definite evidence has ever been forthcoming as to resuscitated persons who have either escaped or who have been killed by the "nasesalars," or corpse-bearers. In the year 1826 it was widely rumoured that a Parsi had come to life in a "dokhma" at Bombay, and that he had escaped from it and was hiding in that city or at Thana for fear of being killed by the Parsis. The relatives of the deceased and the Parsi Panchayet made all possible inquiries, but no clue whatever could be obtained. The Panchayet then issued a proclamation to the Parsis showing the utter groundlessness for any such apprehension; and, to disabuse the public mind altogether, they offered a reward of 200 rupees to any "nasesalar" or person who would in future aid anybody who showed signs of vitality after being taken into a "dokhma," in making his escape, and in restoring him to his family. It must be admitted that Parsis of old had an impression that if a resuscitated person were allowed to come out from the "dokhma," he would bring an epidemic among the people, and that the "nasesalars" therefore murdered him; but

there was no foundation whatever for so monstrous an idea.

It should be stated that the Parsis do not forget their deceased relations who have quitted this sublunary world for another. Ceremonies are performed by the well-to-do on every day during the first year and on every anniversary of the melancholy event. The last ten days of the Parsi year are specially dedicated to the memory of the dead, and the ceremonies then performed are known as the Fravardigan, or Muktad as they are popularly called.

According to the 13th section of the Fravardin Yasht, the souls of the departed desire to be remembered during these days by those whom they lived with and left behind in this world. They are said to express their desire in the following words :—"Who will praise us? Who will offer to us? Who will consider us his own? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with hands bearing food and bearing clothes? And who will pray for us?"

This passage explains, to a great extent, the ceremonies of the Fravardigan during the ten days when one of the rooms of the house is thoroughly cleaned, whitewashed, and set apart. In it every morning the choicest flowers and best fruit of the season are placed in trays upon stands, and prayers are offered during the day. The room thus specially sanctified is made as fragrant and appropriate for the purpose

as possible, in order that the memory of the dead may be revered, and that the living may be able to pray for their dead relatives in an earnest, quiet, and composed frame of mind.

Fruit and flowers are essential in most of the Parsi ceremonies for either the dead or the living. The practice of performing ceremonies and saying prayers for the dead is much insisted upon among the Parsis. It is also affirmed in Pehlevi books that the souls of the dead are extremely gratified and pleased in heaven at seeing that the dear ones on this earth have not forgotten them, and that their memory is preserved in the minds of their relations. To the living also the ceremonies are a matter of consolation, inasmuch as they constantly recall to them those to whom they were joined by worldly ties of love and affection. They also have the effect of bringing before us our transient life, and the unseen world to which we are all hastening, and where many of those near and dear to us and for whom we pray have gone before.

During the days we have referred to, the living engage in prayer to Almighty God, especially in reciting the "patet," or prayer of repentance, beseeching Him to forgive their past sins, and soliciting His guidance and support in the paths of piety and virtue in the year to come.

CHAPTER V.

INTERNAL GOVERNMENT AND LAWS.

Internal government—The Panchayet—Ignorance of the past—Missions to Persia—Books of religion brought from Persia—The first Panchayet—The priests of Navsari—The Panchayet as a court of justice—The penalty of excommunication—Beating with a shoe—Sanction of Governor of Bombay—Internal disputes—The priests pass a law in their own favour, and overreach themselves—The firmness of the laity—Supported by the English Government—A committee of affairs—The first twelve—A new Panchayet—Decline in efficiency—The practice of polygamy—Law against bigamy—Growth of the evil—The case of Jamshedji Beramji Laskari—Law to prevent women going out unattended—Prohibition of offerings to Hindu temples—Decay of the Panchayet—A law for the rich and for the poor—Framji Kavasji—A Parsi petition—Parsi charitable funds—The trusteeship of the Panchayet—The present trustees—A state of confusion—The want of a distinct law—The rule of custom—Question of succession—Intestate properties—The law in Bombay and in the Mofussil—"The nature of chattels real"—A code of inheritance drawn up—A commission appointed—A code of betrothal, etc.—Various questions and considerations—The resolutions of the commissioners—Action of the Government—Substitution of courts for the Panchayet—Those to whom the credit of the new order of things was due.

As there is no authentic record of the early history of the Parsis after they left their mother-country and took up their abode in India, we are in ignorance as to the particular laws by which they were guided, and also of the manner in which their religious, social, and other disputes were decided in the earliest years of their exile. But it can well be imagined that, as is the case in all small and large communities, the

recognised leaders exercised some degree of control or command over their brethren in the regulation of these matters. After leaving Sanjan the Parsis settled in different towns of Gujarat, and those who, by reason of their wealth or knowledge, rose to a higher position than their brethren doubtless exercised considerable influence over their fellow-countrymen. In the course of time the Hindu system of governing the caste by a Panchayet, or an assembly of a certain number of leading men, found favour and became established in the Parsi community. We do not find, however, any mention of a regularly organised Panchayet until the commencement of the eighteenth century, although it is almost certain that the Parsis offered as a body, from the early years of their expatriation from Persia, complete submission to the headmen of their community wherever they happened to be located.

As might naturally be expected, owing to the circumstances under which the Parsis left their native country, the vicissitudes they had undergone, and the way in which they had scattered themselves among a people different in their manners, social life, and religion, without possessing any of the important books of even their own religion, they had become less informed about, and more ignorant of, the true tenets and practices of their creed as time went on. Whenever they required any information or enlightenment

on these subjects they had no alternative but to refer to their brethren in Persia. The necessity for such inquiry having presented itself about the end of the fifteenth century, an influential and wealthy Parsi resident of Navsari named Changa Asa deputed at his own expense, on behalf of the Zoroastrians of Navsari, Surat, Broach, Cambay, and Anklesvar, a talented "behdin" (layman) of the name of Nariman Hoshang to proceed to Persia. He was instructed to obtain answers to a number of questions relating to their religion. Nariman Hoshang was thus the first Parsi who went to Persia after the exodus of the Parsis from that country. After an absence of some years he came back to India with replies to the questions mooted, but he returned eight years later on a similar errand to Persia. He brought back with him from this second visit all the further information that he could gather.

Again, in the year 1527, a Parsi named Kama Asa of Cambay went to Persia with certain questions affecting the Parsi religion, and brought with him to India a complete copy of the well-known *Arda-viraf-nama*.[1] We also find that in the year 1626 the Parsis of Broach, Surat, and Navsari deputed a learned man of Surat, named Behman Aspandiar, to Persia as the bearer of a number of interrogations. On his return to India with the replies he also brought with

[1] An account of this work will be found in the chapters on Religion.

him two religious works on the Parsi religion, the *Vishtasp Yasht* and the *Visparad.* The information thus obtained from time to time by these emissaries to Persia must for a long period have guided the Parsis in the decision of many of their religious and social questions.

It is believed that a properly constituted Panchayet was first formed in Bombay after the island passed into British hands, when the number of Parsis had begun to greatly increase. The Panchayet exercised, however, considerable influence, not only in Bombay, but in the several towns of Gujarat where Parsis had settled. As Bombay grew in importance under the British rule, and the Parsi population increased, this city became the headquarters of the Parsis, and whenever any dissensions or differences of opinion arose among them the advice of the Panchayet was solicited and followed. In religious matters, however, the priests of Navsari have held their own as the supreme authority up to this very day.

The first Parsi Panchayet was a self-constituted body of the elders and influential members of the community; and so long as the majority of the Parsis remained poor and ill-informed, that body received implicit obedience from its co-religionists, and the authorities of Bombay were never appealed to in consequence of any dissension among the Parsis.

The Panchayet was the court of justice, and its decisions, being invariably given after great deliberation, and without fear or favour, were never disputed by the contending parties. Any one refusing to obey the decision of that tribunal was excommunicated from the caste, and his co-religionists held no further intercourse with him. He was not invited to their feasts, religious ceremonies, or marriage festivals. He could not attend either funeral processions or the fire-temples; nor, if he died while in this state of disgrace, could he receive the rites of Parsi burial. Priests were prohibited from performing any religious ceremonies in his family. In fact all intercourse between the person excommunicated and his countrymen was completely broken off. So great, therefore, was the penalty of excommunication that the Parsis seldom failed to accept without demur the decision of their governing body.

This state of affairs seems to have continued until about the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Panchayet of Bombay found that it could no longer rule the Parsi community with its old authority. Under the earlier system offenders were punished by being beaten with a shoe; but it was found almost impossible to enforce this mode of punishment when the Parsis passed under British rule. The Panchayet therefore, about the year 1778, petitioned the governor of the time, Mr. William Hornby, for legal authority

to inflict this punishment.[1] The prayer was granted, and the Panchayet, for the first time we believe, exercised this power with the sanction of the Government.[2]

About eight years after this circumstance a violent dispute arose between the "mobeds" or priests, and the "behdins" or laity, which again rendered Government interference necessary. The altercation sprang out of a regulation or ordinance made by the Panchayet of Bombay, with the consent of its community, in the year 1777, which prohibited the "behdins" from giving their daughters in marriage to the "mobeds." The Panchayet took this step in order to counteract the

[1] *The Honourable* WILLIAM HORNBY, Esq., *President and Governor of His Majesty's Castle and Island of Bombay, etc.*

The humble Petition of the Managers of the Panchayet of Parsis at Bombay

Most humbly sheweth,

That your honour's petitioners, with greatest respect and submission, take the liberty to represent to your honour that some low Parsis, who are ignorant of the rules of our religion, are going to infringe the same, which your petitioners must prevent, but are unwilling to trouble the Justice every time about these people; therefore, we most humbly pray that your honour will permit of your petitioners of shaming them in the Panchayet by beating them with a few *shoes*, agreeable to their crime, which will certainly amend them.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, etc.

(Signed) JAMSHED BOGA MODI AND OTHERS.

[2] *To the Parsis not of the Priest Caste.*

You are hereby empowered to meet and inquire into all matters that are committed by your caste, contrary to what has been agreed to by the majority of the caste, and to punish the offender agreeably to the rules of your caste, so far as not permitting them to come to your feasts, or beat them with *shoes*, but no other corporal punishment.

(Signed) WILLIAM HORNBY.

Bombay, 5th July 1778.

effect of an ordinance which the priests had passed among themselves, to the effect that they would continue to receive in marriage the daughters of "behdins," but that they would not allow their own female relatives to marry with the laity. The Panchayet, therefore, prohibited the giving of daughters in marriage to the priests, and thus sought to deprive them of the unfair privilege they had claimed.

The quarrel owed its immediate origin to a "mobed" having married or betrothed his son to the daughter of a "behdin," in defiance of the regulation passed by the Panchayet. So great was the excitement that Government was compelled to take notice of the event,[1] and a committee, composed of three European gentlemen, was appointed to investigate the causes of the dispute, and to report upon the best mode of bringing about a satisfactory settlement.

After considerable inquiry the commissioners gave

[1] The following is a true copy of an extract from the minutes of consultation, dated 21st April 1786 :—

"The president acquaints the board that some religious disputes at present subsist in the caste of Parsis, which he is apprehensive, from the nature and temper of these people, may be attended with disagreeable consequences unless properly settled, and recommends that a committee be appointed to inquire into the rise of these disputes, and to report upon the best mode of finally settling the same. The president at the same time lays before the board several papers, which have been delivered to him on the occasion by both parties. On consideration of the above, the board agree to appointment of a committee as proposed by the president, and accordingly Messrs. John Forbes, Edward Ravenscroft, and James Stevens senior are appointed to form the same."

it as their opinion that the *bandobast* or ordinance, made by the "mobeds," was unfair, and fully justified the "behdins" in refusing to give their daughters in marriage. They also declared that the resolution passed by the former was calculated to enrich and aggrandise their own sect, for as the "behdins" were excluded from marrying in turn the daughters of the priests, their own women and property were carried into the clerical class without any reciprocal advantages being gained by the laity. On these grounds the commissioners observed that the "behdins" had every right to put a stop to this unequal intercourse by any means in their power, and that consequently their resolution of 1777 was fully justified.

Before these commissioners the Parsi "behdins" asserted that the priests made this regulation during their term of power at Surat, while the latter contended that it was the original law of their own religion, and not a modern innovation. On this point the commissioners reported that there formerly existed a mutual intercourse of marriage between the two classes, and the priests themselves were forced to admit that there had been many cases of intermarriage. The commissioners further reported that the resolution of 1777, which was the immediate cause of the dispute, was equitable in principle, and no blame whatever could with justice be attached to the Panchayet, but that the fault lay rather with

the priesthood, whose selfish designs had necessitated the adoption of such a resolution.

In order to prevent the recurrence of these disputes, and to preserve peace and good order for the future, the commissioners recommended that the Panchayet should be formed upon a more equitable basis, and that its authority, which seemed to them to have been rather assumed than conferred, should be defined by Government, which would thus invest it with a formal sanction. In order to effect this, they recommended that some instrument should be expressly drawn up which would have the effect of giving more weight and efficacy to the decisions of the Panchayet. They further advised that the Panchayet, thus constituted on a new basis, should have powers given to it for settling petty disputes and matters of religious form and ceremony. But they likewise gave it as their opinion that the power of punishing with the shoe, which the Panchayet had exercised by special permission, was objectionable, and recommended that it should be withdrawn.

With the general tenor of this report the Governor in Council concurred. It was decided that the Panchayet, or general assembly of the Parsis, had a right to make regulations for the common benefit and good of the community, as is customary with the races of every denomination living under the protection of the British Government.

In conformity with the recommendation of the committee, the Governor in Council directed the Panchayet to return the names of twenty-four persons, from whom twelve could be selected as a committee for the management of the affairs of the Parsis and the settlement of their private disputes. It was hoped that a committee thus appointed would be the best means of putting a stop to further discussion and dissension among the Parsis. The heads of the Parsi community responded to the call from Government, and out of the twenty-four names submitted twelve[1] were selected, six of them being priests and six laymen. On the 1st of January 1787 these gentlemen were appointed to form a Panchayet for the purpose of adjudicating on all social and religious matters concerning the Parsis, and were emphatically enjoined "to do strict justice to all parties without fear, favour, or affection to any one." The decisions of a body thus expressly appointed by Government carried great influence and weight with the Parsis, and its decisions on all matters affecting them were generally respected and implicitly obeyed. During the lifetime of the members of this properly and authoritatively constituted Panchayet all went

[1] The twelve appointed were Jamshed Boga Modi, Nanabhai Beramji, Manakji Naorozji Wadia, Dadabhai Nasarvanji, Hirji Jivanji, Sorabji Mancherji, Shapurji Bamanji, Dastur Kavasji Rastamji, Sorabji Nanabhai Seth, Dorabji Framji, Kavasji Bhikhaji, and Dorabji Fardunji.

on fairly and smoothly, but after the lapse of about twenty years the power of the Panchayet again dwindled, and its decisions failed to command the respect and obedience previously accorded to them. Death had considerably thinned the ranks of the original members of the Panchayet, and proper steps had not been taken, either by the community itself or by Government, to fill up the vacancies as they occurred. The sons of the old members assumed seats on the Panchayet without any authority from either, and, as is usual in such cases, their position began to be estimated at a lower value. In short, the reputation of the Panchayet steadily waned.

In 1818, however, the leading members of the Parsi community exerted themselves to resuscitate the old Panchayet. A public meeting was held in Dadiseth's fire-temple, and eighteen members were elected, twelve being laymen and six priests.[1] The Panchayet thus formed convened a public meeting,

[1] BEHDINS OR LAYMEN.

Davar Framji Nanabhai.	Sorabji Watcha Ghandhi.
Wadia Jamshedji Bamanji.	Barjorji Dorabji Dadibarjorna.
Seth Kharshedji Ardeshir.	Kharshedji Manakji Shroff.
Dhanjibhai Sorabji Readymoney.	Dadabhai Kavasji Sayer.
Wadia Hormasji Bamanji.	Pestanji Bhikhaji Panday.
Framji Kavasji Banaji.	Naorozji Mahyarji.

THE DASTURS AND MOBEDS (CHIEF PRIESTS AND PRIESTS).

Dastur Kharshedji Jamshedji of Navsari.	Seth Rastamji Shapurji.
Mulla Firoz Kavasji.	Dorabji Framji Panthaki.
Seth Mervanji Naorozji.	Andhiaru Hormasji Dorabji Laskari.

and certain rules for the conduct of business were passed with the unanimous consent of the Parsi community. Various wholesome regulations were also established, chiefly against bigamy, a crime then on the increase among Parsis. Bigamy has always been strictly prohibited among them. The law against it was rigidly adhered to by the ancient followers of Zoroaster, and by their descendants in India for hundreds of years, but in more recent times some Parsis, either because of their disagreeing with their first wives, or on account of their barrenness, began to take to themselves second wives. But it must be said to the credit of the earlier Parsi leaders, and of the Panchayet which adjudged social and religious disputes among the people, that they always set their face against this evasion of the law. Whenever special cases occurred, and parties sought permission to take an additional wife, the ruling body reserved the right of deciding as to the validity or otherwise of the application, and sanctioned or rejected it accordingly.

This practice lasted for centuries after the Parsis arrived in India; but about the beginning of the nineteenth century it was found that they were gradually infringing the law, and that many innocent and unoffending wives were forsaken by vicious husbands on trivial grounds, and new ones taken with impunity. The evil engaged the attention of the

Panchayet, and they resolved by every means in their power to arrest its progress among their countrymen. A public meeting of the Parsi inhabitants of Bombay was therefore convened, as already stated, and rules strictly prohibiting bigamy were adopted by the unanimous decision of the assembly. As these rules are not only interesting in themselves but afford an insight into the special cases under which a person was then allowed to take a second wife while the first was alive, we give a literal translation of them :—

"Further, we, the whole Panchayet now assembled, have this day resolved that from and after this day no person who has a wife living shall marry another; and if any person feel *compelled* to marry another wife, he shall put his case in writing, and represent the same to the above members of the Panchayet; after which the said members will fix a certain time, as they shall think proper, for the investigation of the case and the hearing of the petition of the complainant, which shall be admitted by the complainant and by all the people; and those who will not admit such decision shall be punished as mentioned below by the Panchayet, as to them shall appear fit.

"Further, a person requiring divorce with his first wife, and then permission to marry a second, shall represent his case to the Panchayet, as above stated; and the Panchayet shall meet and inquire into the merits of the case thus brought to their notice; and in case the bad conduct of the first wife be proved according to the usages of our religion, the Panchayet shall take securities from him for her alimony (food, clothing, and lodging) and her jewels, and for funeral expenses on her death, as the Panchayet shall deem proper, and then they shall give him permission to take another wife.

"Further, any person having a trifling dispute with his wife shall not be allowed to marry another. In case he shall marry

without the permission of the Panchayet obtained, as mentioned in the preceding paragraph, he shall be put out of our community.

"Further, any person going out of Bombay to take unto himself a wife at Thana, Karanja, or at any town or village, while his first wife is alive, shall be turned out of caste by the Panchayet on his return to Bombay.

"Further, whoever shall marry a second wife by permission of the Panchayet, the marriage ceremony of such person, if he be a *Shehenshai*, shall be performed by Dastur Kharshedji Jamshedji himself, or with his order by priests under him; and if he be a *Kadmi*, by Mulla Firoz, or under his order by priests under him. If any other priests shall perform the ceremony the Panchayet will not acknowledge it, and shall not allow the offending party to enter any fire-temple; nor shall any persons give to priests officiating as above, without permission, donations in funeral and other ceremonies. Any one not acting according to what is above stated shall be further punished as the Panchayet shall think proper.

"Further, any person attending the nuptials of any individual who shall marry a second wife without permission from the Panchayet shall also be punished by the Panchayet as they think proper.

"Further, any person having no children, and his wife not past the age of delivery, shall not marry a second wife, even though he should promise to satisfy his first wife, and obtain her consent to do so. On the other hand, he shall not allow his wife to take unto herself another man for her husband; and the Panchayet shall not acknowledge any writing or agreement for the mutual discharge of marriage vows, and shall not allow him to take unto himself another wife, nor the woman to take unto herself another husband; and all who do so without the permission of the Panchayet shall be turned out of caste, or shall receive such other punishment as the Panchayet shall deem proper.

"Further, any person obtaining permission from the Panchayet to take a second wife (his first wife being alive) shall be subject to the payment of such a sum of money for charity as the Panchayet shall deem him able to afford; and after the payment of such sum the Panchayet may give him permission to marry a second wife."

The judicious and vigorous proceedings of this Panchayet, which insisted upon implicit obedience to the rules and regulations duly accepted by the community, were for some years attended with most salutary results. Its decisions were respected and admired, because strict justice was administered to all without fear, favour, or distinction between the rich and the poor. The following is an instance of the manner in which the law was executed by the Panchayet in the case of an erring Parsi, who defiantly committed bigamy a few days after the passing of the new caste rules. The delinquent, Jamshedji Beramji Laskari, had recently returned to Bombay from Calcutta with a large fortune, and it may also be explained that he was related to one of the members of the newly-elected Panchayet. Relying on his wealth and connections, he boldly violated the rules of his caste and married a second wife while the first was still alive. The Panchayet thereupon summoned a meeting of the whole "anjuman" or community, which resulted not only in the excommunication of Jamshedji and his newly-married wife, but in his father being compelled to expel him from the paternal home on pain of being himself excommunicated. When Jamshedji saw the Panchayet was determined to make an example of him, he was so annoyed and irritated that he assaulted the priest to whom the duty had been delegated of proclaiming his

excommunication. The offender was therefore summoned before a police magistrate, to whom Jamshedji expressed his regret for what had occurred and his willingness to abide by such punishment as the Panchayet might award him. He made this submission in the belief that that body would deal leniently with him. In this he was destined to be disappointed. The Panchayet immediately convened another meeting of the Parsis, at which the following humiliating resolution, which must have been particularly exasperating to Jamshedji, was passed: —"That the said Jamshedji Beramji Laskari should take one of his own shoes in his hand, and with it strike himself five times on his face, in the presence of the community, which would be assembled for the purpose of witnessing the punishment; and, further, with a halter round his neck, ask the pardon of the priest whom he had assaulted, and of the Panchayet which he had insulted, and recoup to the Panchayet the cost which it had incurred in engaging counsel for prosecuting the case against him."

At a meeting of the community held in Dadiseth's fire-temple on 16th June 1818, and at which a large number of Parsis were assembled, Jamshedji was made to carry out the requirements of the resolution, which must have been felt as particularly degrading by a man of his temperament. His penalty did not stop here. Further humiliation was

in store for him, and in expiation of the crime of bigamy itself he was ordered, after undergoing certain ceremonies, to appear before the Panchayet with a halter round his neck to solicit pardon for his transgression, to deliver up to his first wife all her jewels and property, and to deposit with the Panchayet a sum of two thousand rupees for her maintenance. It was only after complying with all these conditions that he was readmitted into the community.

The rigour and promptitude with which this first breach of the regulations of the Panchayet was punished inspired awe and terror among those who might otherwise have as readily committed the offence themselves, and followed the example of Jamshedji in taking a second wife during the lifetime of the first.

But while the Panchayet punished offenders against caste rules and social laws with firm impartiality, it earnestly desired at the same time to eradicate from the people's minds the pernicious and superstitious customs which had taken root among them through their contact with the other races of India. Little by little practices which were regarded almost as outrages to the purity of their religion had crept into vogue among the Parsis; and these the Panchayet considered itself bound to extirpate. Numerous meetings were held, and various decisions were arrived at for the wellbeing and general advantage of the community. In 1819 it was brought to its

notice that Parsi women were in the habit of leaving their houses after sunset to fetch water or to go to market, and also that they attended pleasure parties without the protection of male companions or servants. The Panchayet held this conduct to be discreditable to the good name of the Parsi community and especially of the female portion. A proclamation was therefore issued to the effect that no woman was to go out of her house alone on any pretence whatever before sunrise or after sunset, and that if any woman was unavoidably detained at the house of a friend or relative she should not return "without a servant and a lighted lantern, and if any woman was found walking on the road unaccompanied as above, she would be seized by 'nasesalars' (corpse-bearers) or persons employed for that purpose, and publicly disgraced and confined in the 'nasakhana.'"[1]

This edict proved so effectual that for some time after it was proclaimed a Parsi woman was scarcely ever to be seen in the streets of Bombay before sunrise or after sunset, because the Panchayet, true to its threat, did actually punish such offenders as were detected by placing them in their so-called prison the "nasakhana." It must be admitted that these were high-handed proceedings, and we can only account for the passive submission to them by remembering that the authority of the Panchayet in those days was

[1] A place where the funeral biers are kept.

so greatly dreaded that none of the community dared to question its behests.

Another important step which the Panchayet took in the direction of reform was that of prohibiting Parsis from sending offerings to Hindu temples. Parsi women in the earlier days were very credulous and full of superstition. They believed everything which was poured into their ears by crafty and designing persons, whether they were Parsi priests, Hindus, Brahmans, or Mahomedan fakirs. They were ready to make vows to Hindu gods and Mahomedan saints for the fulfilment of their desire to be blessed with children if they were barren, or to secure the undivided affection of their husbands if they happened not to be on good terms with them, and for the general attainment of any wishes they might cherish. It was further brought to the notice of the Panchayet that many Parsi women and men also were in the habit of wearing charms, amulets, and threads, obtained from conjurors and magicians in the belief that by wearing them they would not only be protected from evil spirits, but that they would also secure their own happiness and the realisation of all their hopes. In these objectionable practices the men too often connived at the weakness of their better halves. The Panchayet therefore, with a view to effectually suppress these pernicious customs which were dishonourable to the Zoroastrian religion, pro-

claimed on the 4th of November 1819 that no one should make vows or give offerings to Hindu temples or Mahomedan mosques, or wear charms or amulets or threads, and that if any one was found to break these orders he or she would be "seized and publicly disgraced." This threat had a good effect upon erring Zoroastrians, but only for a time, and through fear of public disgrace. In after years, when the power of the Panchayet was again on the wane, the objectionable practices were revived, but happily the greater enlightenment of the present day has resulted in their almost entire discontinuance.

The Panchayet also directed its efforts towards correcting the evils arising from many injurious customs which prevailed about this time among the Parsis, and passed some very salutary rules for that purpose at a public meeting held at the fire-temple of Dadi Nasarvanji Seth on the 15th of December 1823.[1]

[1] In a letter published in the *Bombay Times* of 9th December 1844, Mr. Manakji Kharshedji Shroff gave an abstract of these rules which we quote below, as they are not only interesting in themselves, but also show the nature of the social evils from which the Parsis were then suffering :—

"It was usual previously to the passing of the above-mentioned regulations for Parsi priests (who form a begging fraternity, and they are some hundreds in number) to flock *uninvited* to the houses of any Parsi who might have any ceremony to perform, for the purpose of obtaining, *as if by right*, their share of the *asodad* (gift in money), and not unfrequently were they riotous on such occasions. Independently of this, how exceedingly hard upon individuals having very limited means was it to be compelled to distribute *asodad* to all ! However, such was the influence exercised at that time by the priests,

But the healthy influence of the Parsi Panchayet did not last for any lengthened period. So long as its members were elected by the voice of the whole community, and so long as it conscientiously and impar-

that parties preferred to incur debt rather than the displeasure of the priests by sending them away without any *asodad*. Under these circumstances the late Panchayet wisely ordained by the said regulations that no priest should go *uninvited* to the house of any Parsi, on any occasion, for the purpose of asking *asodad;* nor was any layman to give it to any priests other than those whom he may have invited (and he might invite unrestrictedly as many priests as his inclination prompted or rather his means would admit of his doing).

"On the 4th, the 10th, and the 30th day of every month in the first year, and afterwards on every anniversary of the death of any Parsi, either male or female, 'custom' obliged them to circulate trays loaded with sweetmeats, fruits, cooked dinners, and even pots and pans, both copper and earthen, among their relations, friends, and acquaintances, in addition to giving extensive feasts and dinners to the whole caste, on such occasions. All these practices appeared to the late Panchayet to be both extravagant and unnecessary, and merely indulged in to 'vie with each other' and for the gratification of vanity; and therefore it was ordained by the aforesaid regulations that neither cooked dinners, nor sweetmeats, nor fruits, neither pots nor pans, either copper or earthen, should be sent from one house to another amongst the Parsis; that they were not to give extensive feasts nor dinners to the whole caste on the performance of any ceremony for their dead; that any Parsi who chose to invite a *limited number* of guests from amongst his relations, friends, and acquaintances might do so; *but their number should not be so great as to consume more than* 200 *lbs. of meat*, which was the *maximum* quantity allowed to be purchased *for a single feast; nor should any poultry be used* at such feasts; that any individual wishing to give a dinner to the whole caste might do so, *but only during the days of the gahambars*, and that such caste dinner should consist (as hitherto) of plain rice and curry, *without any kind of meat or poultry.*

"Another, and a most abhorrent practice, sanctioned by custom (borrowed entirely from Hindus), which prevailed among the Parsis, was the going backwards and forwards, on the part of the women, to the houses of their relations and friends and acquaintances daily for

tially dealt out even-handed justice to all, its acts commanded the respect and obedience of the people. But the Panchayet began very soon to decay from the old cause, viz. the seats of the originally elected

months after the death of any male or female member thereof, and when assembled to cry, and beat their breasts, and bemoan their loss. They were also in the habit of keeping fast, and denying themselves beds to lie upon, in order to indicate their excess in grief on such occasions. This being forbidden by the Parsi religion, and found also to be injurious in the extreme to the health of those who indulged in such displays of their feelings, the late Panchayet most humanely ordained that such practice should be checked as much as possible, and that on the death of any infant the meeting of the women should be as short as possible; on that of children from one to seven years of age, they should meet *but for three days;* and on the death of any one above that age, to meet ten days, and *ten days only.*"

Mr. Manakji Kharshedji then goes on to state—

"It so happened that, shortly after the passing of the aforesaid regulations, one of the sisters of Hormasji Bamanji Wadia (then the most distinguished and influential gentleman among the Parsi community, and one of the leading members of their Panchayet) transgressed one of the said regulations by sending round dressed dinners from her house to her relations.

"As soon as the information of this circumstance reached another member of the late Panchayet, he directed his informer to seize upon the pots and dishes containing such dinner, even if in the most conspicuous part of the town, which was accordingly done; and the pots and dishes were sequestrated by the said member of the Panchayet, who collected a number of indigent Parsis together in his church, where they were allowed to feast upon the dainties seized as above mentioned.

"The said member of the Panchayet, after having thus acted, intimated to the said Hormasji Bamanji Wadia what he had done, which was nothing more nor less than his duty to the Panchayet; and he now called upon his distinguished friend and colleague, the said Hormasji, to do his also, by causing a general assembly, and making an example of her who had thus disregarded the Panchayet's order, although so intimately connected with him.

"And be it said, to the credit of the said Hormasji Bamanji Wadia, that, however exalted he was in rank among the Parsis, far from taking

members having on their deaths been usurped by their sons, worthily or unworthily, or by others whose sole recommendation was their influence or connection with the surviving members. A Panchayet thus constituted could not and did not act with the fearless independence of the body elected in 1818. It therefore fell into contempt. The Parsi community at this time had also considerably increased in numbers, and when an influential or wealthy man committed a breach of the social laws enacted by the old Panchayet, he relied on the support of his friends and adherents; and the existing members of their body had not the moral courage to deal with such offenders in the same manner as their predecessors had been in the habit of doing. The fact was soon made clear that they had one law for the rich and another for the poor. When a rich man committed bigamy he not only escaped punishment, but members of the Panchayet itself held free intercourse with him. The terrors of its law were reserved for the needy! A body acting on this principle deserved to die, and it passed away without regret in the year 1836.

Common sense suggests that an assembly profess-

any offence at what had occurred, he highly approved of and applauded the act of his colleague, and consented to the assembly of the Panchayet, which accordingly met the next day, when in the midst of that body he expressed his displeasure at what his sister had done, and caused one of her sons (Ardeshir Framji Wadia) to pay on her behalf the *doty* fine to the Panchayet."

ing to execute justice with one law for the rich and another for the poor cannot command any moral respect. The excessive partiality of the Panchayet at last drew forth from one of its oldest and most respectable members an exposure of the acts of his colleagues that could not but prove fatal to its authority. This memorable protest was made by the late Framji Kavasji, a name which is still and will always be revered by the whole Parsi community. From the date of that protest,[1] followed as it was by similar objections on the part of two other members, Messrs. Naorozji Jamshedji Wadia and Kharshedji Manakji Shroff, the Panchayet was virtually extinguished.

[1] The following is a short abstract of Framji's minute, from a literal translation of it published in an English newspaper some years ago. The minute was addressed to the members of the Panchayet, and fully exposes the extent to which corruptions had reached the Parsi community, and the utter apathy and carelessness with which the Panchayet overlooked the unhappy state of things. "I have resolved," says Framji, "that I shall not hereafter join with you in transacting any of the Panchayet's business. Individuals calling themselves Zoroastrians have now become so reckless that they look upon bigamy and other monstrous sins as anything but sinful. I can cite numberless instances of persons in this place who have not only deserted their lawful wives and joined in matrimony with others, in defiance of the rules of our community, as also of many who are recklessly living and spending their existence in the houses of unprincipled women. You who call yourselves members of the Panchayet will not only take no notice of these affairs, but allow such sinful persons to participate in all the rights of Zoroastrianism. You will not bring such offenders to punishment, but, on the contrary, sometimes think very lightly of their offences. It cannot be said that you are not cognisant of this growing evil, and if you do not discharge your trust faithfully what answer will you give to your Maker on the Day of Judgment?"

In the year 1838, however, backed up by almost the whole of the wealthy and respectable part of the community, the Panchayet again made an effort to recover its position by soliciting a formal mandate from the Legislative Council of India. They also sent to that assembly, through the Bombay Government, certain questions and answers embracing the rights of inheritance among their own people, with a request that, upon the basis of those answers, a law regulating the subject might be framed.

In their petition to the Legislative Council the Parsis, with a view to obtain power for the Panchayet, thus expressed themselves :—

"If, as we hope, your Lordship and the Legislative Council of India may be graciously pleased to pass a regulation in conformity with our desires, the next point to be considered is the enforcement of such regulation. The Panchayet, we regret to inform your Lordship, is now almost powerless, either for good or evil; and unless that body is made respected by the act of Government, the most serious consequences must ensue to the best interests of our caste. So long as the caste continued limited in number, and willing to obey the decisions of the Panchayet, the want of recognised authority in that body did not appeal so forcibly as it now does to the feelings and understandings of those interested in the welfare and prosperity of the Parsi nation. Of late, however, a new spirit has sprung up, and each man claims a right of acting as he may think fit, and very often in defiance of the decisions of the Panchayet and in wilful opposition both to the spirit and letter of our laws and usages. To be useful and of avail both the law and those who administer it must be respected; and respect in ignorant minds seldom exists without some portion of fear. The lower orders of Parsis see that the Panchayet has no power to punish, and

therefore do not respect its authority or its decisions; and as it has hitherto been our pride and almost the wonder of surrounding people that so large a body as the Parsis now comprise should be self-governed, we are led thus most urgently to pray that your Lordship will invest the Panchayet with an efficient authority to control the vicious and encourage the virtuous."

Before the memorial was transmitted to the Supreme Government it was referred by the local authorities to the judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Bombay, and the opinion they expressed was unfavourable to the creation of the authority solicited by the Panchayet. They wrote :—

"We concur in their (petitioners') wishes in regard to the Panchayet so far as to think it highly desirable that there should exist a tribunal satisfactory to themselves, and authorised to decide matrimonial and some other questions where Parsis only were parties to them. But we fear the difficulties are much greater than they apprehend. If its authority were compulsory, questions might arise as to the legality and regularity of proceedings before it; besides that, no longer depending for their force on general consent, its decisions would be much less likely, in the absence of any authentic standard of law, to give general satisfaction.

"But we conceive the inevitable consequence would be, that, unless they had a lawyer as an assessor, which probably they would by no means desire, the Parsi community would be greatly harassed by collision between that Court and the Supreme Court. If once its jurisdiction were established, its exercise in proper cases would be a matter of right which must, if withheld, be enforced by a writ of mandamus from the Queen's Court. If the limits of its jurisdiction, which it would be most difficult accurately to define, and the definition of which would with great difficulty be applied (particularly by persons of totally different habits of thinking) to particular cases as they occurred, were exceeded, writs of prohibition would be the necessary consequence.

"From the Reformation to the eighteenth century, in the course of which period most of the chief questions have been settled, our books are full of collisions of this kind between the spiritual and temporal courts in England. But it is manifest that they would be more frequent and more harassing here. We are very sensible of the value of that highly respectable body the Parsi Panchayet, but we fear that a total change of its character from an assembly qualified to administrate a liberal system of arbitration to one cramped on every side in its operations by the necessity of administering, with the rigour of law, a system (if it amount to one) only calculated to guide the discretion of arbitrators, must be the result of giving it coercive authority."

This opinion of Her Majesty's judges was fatal to the petition, and from that time down to the present day all hope of obtaining Government sanction for the Panchayet has been abandoned. Thus disappointed, that body tried to assume by itself the power over the people which was refused it by the authorities, and, almost as a matter of course, it failed.

For the last fifty years the body known among the Parsis as the Panchayet has not possessed the slightest authority over the people. It dare not pass upon any one, be he rich or poor, the sentence of excommunication which the Parsis of old greatly dreaded for any breach of their social laws. To attempt it would simply be to expose itself to ridicule, as the excommunicated person would be sure to retain the sympathy and continued friendship of his associates even if he did not have

recourse to a criminal court for defamation of character.

The Panchayet is therefore, strictly speaking, powerless for either good or evil, and performs no other functions than those of trustee to certain charitable funds of the community.

For the purpose of securing the better management and administration of their religious and charitable funds and property the members of the old Parsi Panchayet in the year 1823 selected from amongst themselves four leading gentlemen as trustees—namely, Hormasji Bamanji Wadia, Framji Kavasji Banaji, Naorozji Jamshedji Wadia, and Jamshedji Jijibhai. In that year the funds and property consisted of Rs.20,000 in cash, including one sicca loan for Rs.2,000, the compound of the towers of silence, with some land at Chaupati, and a "nasakhana," or house for corpse-bearers, in the fort. But after the appointment of the trustees the funds and landed properties were gradually increased by contributions from different benevolent Parsi gentlemen. The said trustees and their successors regularly published, and are still publishing every year, a full and detailed account of all the receipts and disbursements relating to the funds and landed property under their control. It is a noteworthy fact that the funds which in the beginning amounted to the insignificant sum of Rs.20,000 have now increased to the very

considerable sum of nearly twenty-two lakhs of rupees. This fact alone speaks highly for the charitable disposition of the Parsis, as well as for the judicious management of the trustees who, it may be said to their credit, have performed in a satisfactory manner the functions of the old Panchayet so far as the management of the religious and charitable property is concerned.

The present trustees are the Honourable Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai, Bart., C.S.I. (the recognised leader of the Parsi community), Messrs. Hirjibhai Hormasji Sethna, Dinsha Manakji Petit, Kharshedji Fardunji Parakh, and Framji Nasarvanji Patel. They are assisted by an able and energetic secretary, Mr. Nasarvanji Beramji. The funds under their management are devoted to religious, charitable, and benevolent purposes and objects, such as supporting poor and disabled Parsis in Bombay, Surat, Navsari, Broach, Udvada, and other towns and villages in the Bombay Presidency; giving religious and moral education to the children of poor Parsis at the above-named places; maintaining a college or "madressa" for teaching the Zend and Pehlevi languages to the sons of Parsi priests and laymen; carrying the remains of Parsis to the towers of silence in Bombay and other places; and such other various purposes and objects relating to the Parsi community generally in Bombay and the Mofussil as may appear commendable.

The Panchayet having been thus reduced to the state of a body without any real power or vitality, and there being no recognised code of laws regulating the rights of inheritance, as well as questions of marriage and divorce among the Parsis, confusion and disorder arose in the community whenever there was a clashing of interests between the parties concerned. The Parsis seem never to have possessed the code of laws which their prophet had devised for them. It is said to have been lost with other religious books on their expatriation. In their early sojourn in India they probably depended upon ordinary and recognised principles of justice and equity, and if any dispute arose regarding succession to property or rights of inheritance, their Panchayet, as we have said before, gave a final decision.

It is evident, nevertheless, that the ancient usage was to divide equally among all the children the whole of the property, whether personal or landed, of an intestate person, and this course, having been followed from generation to generation, became the common law of the community. No questions were ever raised respecting the right of dividing landed property by will.

So long as they agreed among themselves, and kept their disputes from being taken into the authorised courts of justice, this usage was strictly adhered to. But when litigious persons discovered that dis-

putes regarding inheritance and succession might be determined according to English law in the authorised court of the country (no provision having been made in the charter of that court for the regulation of such disputes among them as was provided for the Hindus and Mahomedans), a new spirit was created and made itself felt among them. Many elder sons whose fathers had died intestate threatened, in violation of long-observed usage, to take the whole of the freehold property for themselves, to the prejudice of their brothers, as they knew that, the English law being on their side, the court would decide in their favour.

Such was the state of Parsi society after the fall of the Panchayet owing to the absence of a suitable code of laws for governing their social relations. The leaders of the community therefore besought the assistance of the legislature in securing for their co-religionists a code of recognised laws relating to Marriage and Divorce and to Intestate Succession. Efforts towards the attainment of this object were carried on from the year 1835 to 1865, and it was not until the latter year that these endeavours were crowned with success, as will be seen later on. Before this year (1865), if there was any law for governing the social relations of the Parsis, that which applied to the Presidency town was different from that which governed the Parsis in the Mofussil. When the Royal

Charter of 1824 constituted the late Supreme Court, the Parsis of the Mofussil were under a different system of substantive law from that of the Presidency town, and the adjudicating tribunals were guided by the usages and customs then considered binding upon the community in conformity with the provisions of Regulation 4 of 1827, by which it was enacted: "that in the absence of Acts of Parliament and Regulations of Government applicable to any case the usage of the country in which the suit arose, or if none such appears the law of the defendant shall govern the decision, and that when in any matter depending on the peculiarities of any other law (except the Hindu or Mahomedan) or on a rule or usage of a sect or caste, a doubt arises regarding such law, rule, or usage, the Court shall ascertain the same by examining persons versed in such law, or the heads of such sect or caste or other well-informed persons."

The law applicable to the Parsis of the Mofussil was therefore ascertained and administered in the mode thus indicated. The disadvantages of this method of administering the law were its uncertainty, its consequent tendency to encourage litigation, and the inconvenience and delay arising from having to ascertain the law in each case as well as to apply it.

In the Recorder's Court of Bombay, however, the law appears for some time to have been administered

to Parsis on the same principles as in the Mofussil. Thus in the case of the "*Ghistas*" Sir James Mackintosh, just before leaving India in 1811, was induced, on evidence that such was Parsi usage, to admit to the right of inheritance the illegitimate son of an intestate Parsi, because he had been invested with the sacred badge. This decision, which caused a great sensation among the Parsi community at the time, was reversed by Sir John Newbold (Sir James Mackintosh's immediate acting successor), and it is by no means improbable that this and other instances of the difficulty and uncertainty introduced into the administration of law among Parsis, by the admission of such evidence of usage, had much to do with inducing the judges of the late Supreme Court to exclude Parsis from the benefit of that clause in the Charter of 1823 which provides: "That matters of contract, inheritance, and succession should be determined, in the case of Mahomedans, by the laws and usages of the Mahomedans, and in the case of the Gentoos by the laws and usages of the Gentoos." The judges of the late Supreme Court declined to regard the Parsis as Gentoos, and from thenceforth the Parsis within the limits of the late Supreme Court were "in all matters of contract, inheritance, and succession" subjected to English civil law.

Thus the Parsis of the Mofussil and of the Presidency towns were exposed, in the administration

of the law, to two different classes of evils—in the Mofussil to the fluctuation and uncertainty of decision necessarily arising from admitting proof of unwritten usage as evidence of what the law is, and to the consequent encouragement thus given to speculative litigation; and in the Presidency towns to the still graver inconvenience of being subjected, in matters of contract, inheritance, and succession, to a system of laws which were utterly unsuited to their social usages and requirements, while in matters matrimonial it is beyond all doubt that before 1865 they were practically without any law.

It was the consideration of the former class of evils that led, in 1828, to the letter and the queries of Mr. Borradaile, addressed to the Parsi communities of Surat and Bombay, in which he stated that, in consequence of their possessing no regular code of laws to which all the men of their nation could pay obedience, great litigation had risen amongst them, and that, as they had no ancient book of laws which all their tribe accept, and no record of their ancient usages, it was the opinion of Government that they, the Parsis of Surat and Bombay, should assemble and consult together, commit their laws and customs to writing, and deliberately adopt a code of laws for their own government and guidance. Otherwise, the writer added that there would be no end to the disputes and litigation among the body of their

nation. With that letter he transmitted a set of queries, prepared by order of the Government of Bombay, on subjects connected with the laws of inheritance, succession, and adoption, and with the law of property as between husband and wife.

To this communication no answer was returned to Government by the Parsis of either Surat or Bombay until the 18th of August 1836, eight years afterwards. Before that time, however, a circumstance occurred which made the Parsis living within the jurisdiction of the late Supreme Court of Bombay more anxious for positive legislation on matters connected with their rights of inheritance and succession. The circumstance referred to was the institution of a suit in the Supreme Court, in which the eldest son of an intestate Parsi claimed, by virtue of the English law of primogeniture, to be declared sole heir to the immovable estate of his deceased father. The Parsis took alarm, and on the 20th November 1835 transmitted to the Legislative Council a petition, very numerously signed, praying to be protected against this threatened application of the English law.

The petition had the desired effect. A resolution was passed by the Legislative Department on the 13th of January 1837, whereby the principle was affirmed that, "though the national usages of the Parsis were not, like the Hindu and Mahomedan rules of inheritance, marriage, and succession, recognised

by law, yet that Parsis who were in possession of land within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Courts, which they have inherited according to their national usages and with the acquiescence of all interested parties, ought not to be disturbed in that possession; and it was declared that this appeared to his Lordship in Council to be one of those cases *in which the strict enforcement of law would defeat the end for which laws are made, would render property insecure, and would shake the confidence of the people in the institutions under which they live.*"

These are the principles on which the Indian Legislature proceeded in passing Act IX. of 1837 (Appendix A), which, as is well known, provides that "immovable property, *within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Courts,* shall, as regards its transmission by the will of a Parsi testator, or on the death of a Parsi intestate, be taken to be and to have always been of the nature of chattels real."

This Act applied solely to the Parsis residing in Bombay as regards their immovable property; thus a further distinction was made between the Parsis living in the Presidency town and in the Mofussil.

The Parsis, however, did not regard this as a permanent and satisfactory settlement of their laws of inheritance and succession. They therefore forwarded another petition in November 1838, on the basis of the answers to Mr. Borradaile's queries, praying that

a regulation might be passed in terms of those answers which they presented "as embracing the rights of inheritance and succession that are acknowledged by the Parsi nation." But owing to another petition having been transmitted to the Legislative Council by some of the Zoroastrians, embodying adverse opinions, and owing to several other causes, the matter remained unsettled.

In the answers to Mr. Borradaile two points were principally noticeable. In the case of intestacy of a male Parsi they proposed to give a right of inheritance to the widow and daughters, fixing the amount at one-eighth for each. They proposed to give the Parsi wife a power of disposing by will, in her husband's lifetime, with or without his consent, of all property she might have brought from her father's house.

Four years after the passing of the Chattels Real Act of 1837, the Parsis of Bombay, in a letter dated 5th of March 1841, and addressed to Mr. Borradaile, who had meanwhile become a member of the Indian Law Commission, expressed their opinion on the evil arising from subjecting, as regards inheritance, all the property of intestate Parsis within the limits of the Supreme Court to English law, notwithstanding the partial relief afforded by the Act of 1837. In that letter they urged the necessity for something being done at once, on the ground that the English law in cases of intestacy was still wholly unsuited to their

requirements. Every day, they said, was bringing forth stronger proofs of the necessity of some action to meet their wants and wishes; as, in the event of persons dying intestate, their property was liable to the operation of the English law, which was quite at variance with their customs and usages. They cited a case of recent occurrence, in which a Parsi had shortly before his death married a second wife, leaving children (minors) by the first marriage; according to English law the widow in that case was entitled to a third, and the children, in equal shares, to the residue. This, they said, according to their laws and customs, was a most unfair and improper distribution of property, as by it the son was deprived of the means of carrying on the father's name, while the daughters, if any, were invested with a large share of property, which they could not watch over themselves, and which must surely expose them to the machinations of bad and worthless relatives or other persons into whose hands they might confide their affairs.

The evils which have been mentioned were admitted by the judges of the late Supreme Court. They frequently suggested to the Parsis that they should remedy the unhappy state of things by preparing and submitting a code of laws, which, if agreed upon by the mass of their people, would be accepted as law in the English courts of justice. The late lamented Sir Erskine Perry, Chief Justice

of the Supreme Court of Bombay, than whom none among those who have sat upon the Bench of any of the supreme courts of this country has ever been a greater well-wisher to the natives of India, wrote in the year 1843 to a well-known member of the Parsi community in these words: "I have been so fully impressed for some time past with the necessity of a legislative enactment for the Parsis, that I had determined to draw up a report to Government, pointing out what the subjects are on which legislation is required, and discussing the different provisions which it might be expedient to adopt."

Acting upon such hints and advice, two or three efforts were made to devise a code for the Parsis, but they proved unsuccessful, owing to the want of unanimity among them. The last step, however, which the Parsi community took in this matter in the year 1855, aided by the wisdom and experience of its elder, and the vigour, activity, and industry of its younger and more educated members, met with the success it deserved.

In response to advertisements which appeared in all the Gujarati journals, a public meeting of the members of the community was held on the 20th August 1855, at Bombay, in the hall of one of their fire-temples, for the purpose of adopting measures for declaring the laws binding upon the professors of the Zoroastrian faith. There were present on the occasion,

besides the heads of the community, many of its most influential members. The whole assemblage numbered upwards of 3,000 persons.

The object of the meeting was fully explained by Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, who recounted at some length the history of the previous efforts of the Parsis to obtain for themselves a uniform system of laws. The Parsi Law Association was then formed. The meeting having declared that it was deeply impressed with the necessity of procuring for the community the enactment of laws adapted to their race, and such as might be recognised and enforced by the local authorities and by courts of justice, a managing committee of one hundred and fifty gentlemen was appointed. These again selected by ballot twenty from among themselves to form a sub-committee, to which was entrusted the task of preparing a draft code of laws, and of petitioning the Legislative Council of India for their due and formal enactment. The late Mr. Manakji Nasarvanji Petit was the first chairman, and after him Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel acted in that capacity, while Messrs. Naorozji Fardunji and Sorabji Shapurji Bengali were the joint honorary secretaries.

The committee set earnestly to work in the business which had been entrusted to it by the voice of the whole community, and, after much labour, careful investigation, and exhaustive inquiry, it prepared a

code of inheritance, succession, and other matters, and sent it in to Government. It was then submitted to the Legislative Council of India by the late Mr. LeGeyt, who was at the time the Bombay member in the Supreme Council. The subject was carefully considered by a select committee, and on the 19th of May 1860 the Legislative Council directed the institution of certain inquiries by the Government of Bombay with a view to ascertain the general feelings and wishes of the Parsi community with respect to the several provisions proposed in the draft code. The result was that many adverse opinions were received in regard to several of its provisions from the Parsis of Surat, Broach, Thana, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Poona, and other places in the Bombay Presidency.

The further information thus obtained together with the opinion expressed upon it by the managing committee of the Parsi Law Association was duly forwarded by the Government of Bombay to the Legislative Council, and the select committee in presenting its report recommended that Government should be requested to appoint a Commission to make a preliminary inquiry into the usages recognised as laws by the Parsi community of India, and the necessity of special legislation in connection with them. The principles on which the inquiry ought to be conducted were intimated in the report. "The Commission," it was suggested, "if assembled in

Bombay, might receive the evidence of deputations from the Parsi communities of all the other towns from which petitions regarding this code have been received, or might hear the arguments of counsel on behalf of such communities, and might consult all the authorities, written or oral, to which reference has been or might be made, recording afterwards a deliberate judgment in respect to each point separately, and specifying what appeared in each instance to be the prevailing usage, tradition, or wish of the majority of the entire Parsi community as made known to them."

This Commission was appointed by the Bombay Government on the 26th December 1861, and consisted of the Honourable Mr. Justice Arnould, Mr. Henry Newton, C.S., and Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel, president of the managing committee of the Parsi Law Association, as representing the Bombay Parsis, and Mr. Rastamji Kharshedji Modi of Surat, as representing the Mofussil Parsis. The first meeting of the Commission took place on the 15th of February 1862.

On that day the managing committee of the Parsi Law Association submitted to the Commission a supplemental draft code of betrothal, marriage, and divorce. It is necessary to explain how the Parsis came to prepare this supplemental draft code. In the year after the Parsi Law Association was formed a

new phase in the legal status of the Parsis of Bombay came into effect. On the 17th of July in that year the Privy Council decided (in the case of Ardeshir Kharshedji *versus* Pirozbai) that the late Supreme Court of Bombay, *on its ecclesiastical side*, had no jurisdiction to entertain a suit brought by a Parsi wife against her husband for restitution of conjugal rights, and for maintenance,—intimating at the same time that the late Supreme Court, *on its civil side*, might possibly administer some kind of remedy for the violation of the duties and obligations incident to or arising out of the matrimonial union between Parsis.

But that was a costly and hazardous experiment, and no Parsi would resort to it. Practically, therefore, the Parsis, as regards the enforcement of all duties and obligations arising out of the marriage union, were without any law, and the Parsi Law Association, as soon as the decision of the Privy Council was known in the case cited, set about to remedy the evil by drawing up this supplemental code, and submitting it to Sir Joseph Arnould's Commission, so that it might be considered along with the draft Act relating to intestate succession.

The Government Commission, after a very searching and exhaustive inquiry extending over a period of about eight months, made its report on the 13th of October 1862. That lucid and most interesting document will well repay perusal. But we think

it needless to reproduce here the various reasons adduced by the Commission on the strength of the evidence, written, oral, and traditional, given by the witnesses examined before it. It will be sufficient for us to state the several heads of inquiry to which the Commission directed its attention, and to record briefly the conclusions to which it came and which led that body to recommend to the Legislature the passing of the Parsi Succession Act (No. 10 of 1865) and the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (No. 15 of 1865). The first point which presented itself to the Commission for consideration was :—

> What, if any, are the usages recognised as law by the Parsis of India as to the right of females to inherit from intestate male Parsis ?

On this question, after full inquiry, the Commission came to the same conclusion as that arrived at by Mr. Borradaile in the year 1825, viz. that the Parsis had *no law*, for such books as they had before they emigrated from Persia were at that time all lost, and the rules which, by their engagement with the Hindu chief of Sanjan, they bound themselves to obey formed, together with the custom of the country which they insensibly adopted in their intercourse with the people, a body of rules or common law differing in few respects from that custom of the country founded on Hindu law which regulates the whole of a Hindu's life.

Subject to these observations, the Commission reported that such usage as had been hitherto regarded as law by the Parsi community was generally against the right of females to inherit any portion of the property of a male Parsi dying intestate. The fair result of the evidence on that point was, that in such cases *by usage* Parsi widows and daughters had generally (except in Bombay during some years) been held entitled only to maintenance, and not to a heritable share.

The second question decided by the Commission was :—

> What, if any, are the rules to be found on this point in the sacred books of the Parsis, or in any of their authoritative writings ?

On this point, after referring to some ancient Pehlevi works on the Parsi belief, and quoting the opinion of Dr. Haug, a high authority on the religion of the Parsis, which was to the effect that the sacred writings of the Parsis—*i.e.* the Zend Avesta—did not contain any explicit directions as to the mode in which property was to be distributed among the relations of a man or woman dying without a will, but that it was not according to the spirit of the old Zoroastrian law to exclude women from the right of inheritance; and after referring to the evidence of Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, the able and active secretary of the Parsi Law Association, who produced before it the

originals of several letters from eminent "dasturs" in reply to certain queries relating to the subject circulated by the managing committee of that body, it came to the conclusion that, although only a few passages could be produced to show that the right of Parsi females to inherit on the death of their intestate husbands and fathers was explicitly laid down in Parsi works of authority, yet there was some evidence that such was the ancient rule. While, on the other hand, the practice of excluding from the inheritance the widows and daughters of male intestate Parsis was not authorised by either any tradition of ancient Persian usage or any text of their ancient books. It was clear, therefore, that a law affirming the right of Parsi females to inherit the property of their intestate male relatives could not reasonably or with truth be objected to as having a tendency to offend the religious feelings of any class of the Parsi community.

The third question was :—

> Supposing the heritable right of Parsi females in cases of male intestacy to be established, what, with reference to the requirements and wishes of a majority of the entire Parsi community, ought to be the respective amounts of the widow's and of the daughters' shares ?

The amount fixed in the draft code was one-half of a share for the widow, and one-fourth of a share for each daughter. This the Mofussil Parsis considered too high. They said that such an allocation

would bear heavily on the poorer families, who were relatively more numerous among the Mofussil than among the Bombay Parsis. The Commission was naturally anxious to procure illustrative evidence on this point, but, as the result of their inquiries, the majority among them felt constrained to record their opinion that the suggested case of hardship was not satisfactorily made out, and that the apprehensions of the Mofussil Parsis as to the effect on the poorer families of the allocation proposed in the draft code appeared to be mainly founded on a vague dread of change and innovation.

On this question, therefore, the answer of the majority, the Modi of Surat dissenting, was in favour of the amounts fixed in the draft code which represented the opinion and feelings of the greater number of the Parsi community in India.

The fourth point on which the Commission had to record a judgment was :—

> Had Parsi married women, by custom or otherwise, a right, in the lifetime of their husbands, to hold or dispose of separate property? and if not, is it expedient to confer on them such right, and, if so, to what extent?

The answer was that the usage hitherto had been that Parsi wives were considered as having separate property to a limited extent over the jewels and other possessions given them on marriage by their father's family. The additional powers conferred on them in

the draft code were, as amended by the Commission, deemed novel but expedient.

The fifth question was :—

> Whether any case had been made out for the necessity of special legislation in regard to the points embraced in the draft code of inheritance and succession, or should the Parsis of the Mofussil be left, as heretofore, to usage on those points, and the Parsis of Presidency towns to English law ?

In the course of its inquiry under this important head it became clear to the Commission that the Mofussil Parsis were completely at one with the Bombay Parsis in the conviction that the English laws of inheritance and succession and the English law of property as between husband and wife were absolutely unsuited to the requirements of the Parsi community. Rather than be placed as the Bombay Parsis were during the existence of the late Supreme Court, and since the establishment of the High Court, under the operation of English law on these points, the representatives of the Mofussil Parsis examined before the Commission emphatically stated that they would willingly adopt the draft code without any modification. Nothing, indeed, could exceed, the Commission stated, the energy of language with which the Mofussil Parsis deprecated the notion of being placed in the same legal position as that which was then occupied by their brethren of Bombay.

The select committee of the Legislative Council

had remarked in their report "that the English law of chattels real" had for a quarter of a century governed in cases of intestacy the transmission of all property of Parsis within the limits of the Supreme Court, and that they had no evidence before them that any evil, or what kind or extent of evil, had resulted from that state of the law.

Such evidence was abundantly supplied to the Commission by Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, who enumerated, in the course of his lengthened oral evidence before it, a great variety of cases showing clearly the nature and extent of the hardship imposed upon Parsis, and which had produced a feeling of profound dissatisfaction by the application to them, within the limits of the Supreme Court and afterwards within that of the High Court, of the English law of distribution of property in cases of intestacy.

This evidence was so valuable and conclusive that the Commission requested a reference to it by the Legislature.

With regard to the English law of property as between husband and wife, the Commission remarked :—

"That common law of England which merges the wife in the husband and declares her absolutely incapable, during coverture, of contracting, holding, or disposing of property, the evidence of Mr. Naorozji Fardunji supplied the Commission with many striking instances, in which the enforced application of this law to Parsis, within the limits of the late Supreme Court

(and it will be equally applicable to Parsis living within the ordinary original civil jurisdiction of the High Court), had led to results diametrically opposed to the feelings of the Parsi community, and totally inconsistent with their view of conjugal relations and marital rights.

"Indeed it hardly requires instances to prove that such must necessarily be the result of applying the English common law of property as between husband and wife to any other people than the English. That law stands alone in the jurisprudence of the world. It is only rendered endurable to the English themselves by the cumbrous device of marriage settlements, an expedient, as is well known, almost always resorted to where there is any property or expectation of property on the lady's side; an expedient, which, wherever it is resorted to, amounts to the institution by contract and convention of a law *pro hac vice*, and as between the parties, which sets aside the strict law of the land. In 1858 the English Legislature, by the Act for protecting the separate earnings of married women, set aside by statute so much of this law as had previously made these earnings in all cases the prey of the husband; and it hardly admits of a doubt that if the English nation can ever acquire for itself a code of substantive civil law, one of the most welcome modifications of the existing common law would be the exchange for a more civilised system of the barbarous and feudal rule of the common law by which the wife, for all purposes of property, is merged in the husband, or, to use language both historically and technically more correct, by which the *Feme* is *Coverte* by the *Baron*."

On this head, therefore, the Commission was unanimously of opinion that the Parsi community of Bombay had established the existence of a social grievance which called for a legislative remedy, and that they had made out a case for special legislative protection against the further application to them of the English common law of Baron and Feme.

The sixth question was :—

Could it, in any case, be recommended to provide for the relief of the Parsis of the Presidency towns by special and limited legislation, leaving the Parsis of the Mofussil under a separate system of law? and if so, was the actual case one in which such a course could be recommended?

As the Mofussil Parsis strongly protested that they preferred to remain in their old position, viz. subject to the ordinary courts of the country, which regulated their decisions in accordance with such evidence of custom as was produced before them, the observations of the Commission on this head are so valuable that we quote them here entire, with the statement that the conservative Modi of Surat alone dissented :—

"Laws should be commensurate with the evils they are passed to remedy. Symmetry and uniformity in legislation are, no doubt, desirable; but the primary objects are justice and the general good. That one portion of a limited community are living within the dominion of a paramount State, under a system of laws with which they are contented, and which therefore they do not seek to alter, can never be a reason for refusing reasonable reforms in legislation to another portion of the same community also living within the dominion of the same paramount State, but under a widely different system of laws, with which, on good grounds, they are not contented, and which therefore, on good grounds, they *do* seek to alter. In such a case as this, if the special legislation proposed for the relief of the discontented class of the community in question be good in itself and as regards them, the mere fact that it is not desirable or practicable to extend it to the contented class can never be an argument against its enactment for the discontented class; no doubt, if enacted there will be two classes of the same com-

munity living under diverse systems of law; but so they do now: the only difference is that, in the actual state of things, the law under which the Parsis of the Presidency towns live is not only not uniform with the Mofussil Parsi law, but is also, as they contend, bad; whereas if altered as they desire, though still not uniform with the Mofussil law, it would be, as they contend, good.

"Having arrived at the conclusion that the Parsis of the Presidency towns have real grievances to complain of in the existing state of the law applicable to them, and that the changes they propose would be for them beneficial changes, we should be very reluctant, especially considering the numbers and intelligence of the Bombay Parsis, to refuse to recommend the adoption of the reform they seek, simply because we could not also recommend an extension of the same reform to the Mofussil Parsis.

"But is this the case? Is the law of inheritance, succession, and property as now administered to Parsis in the Mofussil so satisfactory as to require no reform? Is there such serious and well-grounded objection to the reforms proposed by the Bombay Parsis as to lead to any apprehension of real inconvenience from extending to the Mofussil the proposed legislation?

"On both these points the majority of the Commission are of opinion in the negative.

"They think it would be a clear gain to the Mofussil Parsis to have their laws of inheritance, succession, and property in marriage fixed by positive regulation instead of fluctuating with the vague evidence of unwritten usage; they also think that neither on the ground of religious scruple nor apprehended inconvenience have the Mofussil Parsis made out any case against the proposed provisions of the draft code; and, though still of opinion that in such case limited legislation would be admissible, the majority of the Commission are, therefore, prepared to recommend that the provisions of the draft code, as amended by them, and subject of course to such further amendments as the Supreme Legislative Council might see fit to make, should be extended to the entire Parsi community of India."

Having thus disposed of the question of the Draft

Succession Act in all its important bearings, the Commission proceeded to review the evidence adduced before it in reference to the supplemental draft code of betrothal, marriage, and divorce, under the following heads:—Was there any necessity for special legislation as to the Parsi law of marriage and divorce? and if so, was the special legislation proposed in the draft code generally unobjectionable?

As to the necessity for special legislation on these points, the Commission remarked that at all events for the Parsis of the Presidency towns it had formed a clear opinion, previous to the establishment of the High Court of Judicature.

Before that the Bombay Parsis, a body constituting the preponderating majority of the entire Parsi population of India, far in advance of any other portion of the Parsi race in wealth, intelligence, and civilisation, had, since the decision of the Privy Council in 1856, been living in a state of lawlessness as to all that regards the marriage tie, of which even in the most barbarous communities there are not many well-attested examples. They had no law at all on the subject. Each man did as seemed good in his own eyes. A paper, carefully prepared by the secretaries of the Parsi Law Association and submitted to the Commission, disclosed the occurrence, within two years, of not less than twenty-six well-known cases of bigamy. This fact was sufficient to show the

necessity for some change in the law as it applied to the Parsi community of Bombay.

We have already noticed in previous pages the wholesome and salutary rules which were passed by the Parsi Panchayet in the year 1818 against bigamy, but there was nothing in the law to uphold them. The Indian Penal Code, enforced by the Legislature in 1860, has, however, made marrying again during the lifetime of husband or wife punishable as an offence; and that provision of the law was calculated to check the tendency to bigamy, which had been increasing among the Parsis.

The Mahomedans and Hindus can take more than one wife, because their customs and religion sanction a plurality of wives. Hence a Hindu or a Mahomedan who marries during the lifetime of his first wife is not indictable under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code. But with the Parsis the question was a doubtful one. All the books of the Zoroastrian religion are not extant. It is known that, with or without the sanction of the Panchayet, Parsis have taken a second wife during the lifetime of the first; and it is doubtful, if a case had been taken before a criminal court (prior to the passing of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act) under the Penal Code, whether a conviction would have been obtained so long as usage and custom could have been pleaded in its favour.

In their draft Act the Parsi Law Association had inserted provisions legalising the validity of infant marriages and betrothals among Parsis, and prescribing criminal penalties in respect of the violation of duties and obligations supposed to arise out of these marriages and betrothals.

These provisions naturally did not meet with the approval of the European members of the Commission, who regarded the practice of infant marriages and betrothals (a practice plainly derived from the Hindus, and not in any way sanctioned by Zoroastrian Scripture or ancient usage) as very much opposed to the true progress of the Parsi community in civilisation and morality. They did not, therefore, recommend the enactment by the Indian Legislature of any laws that had a tendency directly or indirectly to sanction a practice they were agreed in regarding as injurious. The European members of the Commission further observed that they had good reason to believe that the alterations they had suggested in that respect would be favourably received by a large and highly influential minority among the Parsi community, and the author of this work can bear testimony, as a Parsi, to the correctness of the view expressed by the European members of the Commission. Had any legal sanction been given to such customs, by imposing criminal penalties, the Parsis would have been prevented from making the advance which they

have made of recent years in discountenancing the objectionable practice of infant marriages, a custom equally opposed to the principles of those who were invited to legislate and to the true interests of those on whose behalf legislation was solicited.

The next question on which the European members differed from the Parsis on this Commission—as was very natural—was, Whether the Indian Legislature could rightly be asked to recognise difference of religious belief existing before and at the time of marriage as a valid ground for rendering a Parsi marriage *ipso facto* void, or to recognise difference of religious belief arising after marriage as a just reason for making a Parsi marriage voidable ?

The European members of the Commission said that they could not "recommend that either of these provisions should be adopted by the Indian Legislature. As long as the religious feelings of the Parsis retained their present force, neither provision, if adopted, would be very likely to be called into operation : the preventive check supplied by such religious feelings may safely be trusted to this extent. But it would be a retrograde step in legislation to make the violation of such feelings the basis *per se* of an absolute avoidance or dissolution of the marriage contract. The restriction proposed in Section XII. appears peculiarly odious. In cases where religious sentiment has not availed to prevent a Parsi male or female from contracting

marriage with a stranger of another faith, the intervention of law to render such marriage contract civilly null and void would appear to be singularly harsh and oppressive."

On these two important questions, about which the European members of the Commission differed from their native colleagues, the Government of Bombay, in its resolution dated 20th October 1863, rightly agreed with the former and expressed itself thus :—

"The Honourable the Governor in Council considers that the Commission has taken exactly that view of this question which good policy and common sense would dictate. The Commission would not prohibit such marriages by explicit legislation, but at the same time it would omit the provisions in the proposed Act which relate to them, and which are intended to assert and vindicate the duties and obligations arising from such contracts. It would leave them to be dealt with, *in foro domestico* as it were, by the Panchayet. This is, in the opinion of the Honourable the Governor in Council, exactly the proper view. The British Government cannot justly be called on, when legislating for the assertion of Parsi rights, to recognise customs which it deems injurious, and which have no sanction from the religious law of the Parsis, but which have been insensibly adopted from the Hindus around them.

"The Honourable the Governor in Council also considers that he should express an opinion on the 9th question discussed by the Committee.

> 'Can the Indian Legislature be rightly asked to recognise difference of religious belief existing before and at the time of marriage as a valid ground for rendering a Parsi marriage *ipso facto* void, or to recognise difference of religious belief taking place after marriage as a valid ground for rendering a Parsi marriage voidable ?'

"The European members of the Commission cannot recommend that either of these provisions should be adopted by the

Legislature. The Parsi members take the opposite view. The Honourable the Governor in Council would commit this most difficult question to the careful consideration of the Government of India, with an expression of his own opinion that he takes the same view as Sir Joseph Arnould and Mr. Newton on the first, but not on the second provision. The Honourable the Governor in Council would not interfere with a contract entered into between two parties with their eyes open. But the question is more difficult as to a change of religious belief by one of the contracting parties after marriage. He is of opinion that the marriage should, in the event contemplated, be voidable at the instance of either party, due provision being made for the wife if her conduct be pronounced by the courts to be blameless. He arrives at this conclusion from a consideration of how much in the East the forms of religious belief enter into the domestic life, and that it is the duty of the British Legislature in a matter of this kind to regard Eastern rather than European feelings—the feelings, in other words, of the governed."

The Legislature, therefore, in passing the Act agreed with the views expressed by Sir Joseph Arnould and Mr. Henry Newton, and by the Government of Bombay, on the two important questions just referred to, and the provisions proposed in the draft Act submitted by the Parsis in respect thereto were omitted.

There was one more question which the Commission had to consider and to give its opinion upon, and that was whether the Panchayet under the limitations proposed in the supplemental draft code, as amended, was likely to prove a satisfactory tribunal for the adjudication of questions of marriage and divorce among Parsis.

On this point the Commission was of opinion that, subject to such rules as to practice and procedure as were added by it in the draft Act, there would be no objection to the Parsi Panchayet being authorised as a tribunal for adjudicating on questions of Parsi marriage and divorce subject to appeal to the High Court.

The more far-seeing of the Parsis did not, however, view this proposal with favour. It would never have been possible to have always selected the best men of the community to act on the Panchayet, and thus it could never have commanded that respect which is always instinctively paid to properly constituted and authorised tribunals of the country. As the right of appeal to the High Court was reserved, every case decided by the Panchayet would have been taken on appeal before that Court. The Legislature therefore very rightly and wisely substituted the mode prescribed in the Act it had passed, by which all matrimonial causes among Parsis are decided in Bombay by a judge of the High Court, assisted by eleven Parsi delegates appointed by Government on their nomination by the Parsi Justices of the Peace for the city, and in the Mofussil by the judge and delegates who are duly selected by him in consultation with the community. The district courts are presided over by the judge of the Zilla (district). We may quote here

the reasons which induced the select committee of the Legislative Council to substitute the matrimonial courts for the Panchayet. The Honourable Mr. Anderson, in moving that the committee's report be taken into consideration, said :—

"The principal alteration in the Bill is the substitution of Parsi matrimonial courts for Panchayets. With reference to Panchayets I would wish to offer a very brief explanation. The term taken by the Parsis from the Hindus around them has not been very happily chosen, and it does not convey the idea of the kind of tribunal which it was in contemplation to establish. That tribunal was one of which the members were to be chosen by the Parsis themselves, and of which the members were men in whom the Parsis had confidence. But it was never intended that the rude 'under the tree' mode of investigation which the idea of a Panchayet suggests should be adopted. But I freely admit that the Parsi matrimonial courts will constitute far more efficient tribunals than the Panchayets, and that they will fulfil all the conditions which the Legislature has a right to impose on an institution which it invests with grave responsibilities. It is proposed, then, to establish Parsi chief matrimonial courts in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, and Parsi district matrimonial courts in such places as the discretion of the Governor-General in Council and the local Governments may suggest. A district under the Act may include more than one ordinary judicial district; and such places in which, on account of the fewness of the Parsi inhabitants, the local Governments shall not deem it necessary to establish matrimonial courts, are to be regarded as under the jurisdiction of the chief matrimonial courts in the Presidency towns. The matrimonial courts in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay are to be presided over by the Chief Justice, or other judge of Her Majesty's High Court of Judicature in those towns, aided by eleven delegates, and the district matrimonial courts by a district judge aided by seven delegates.

"The delegates are to be Parsis, appointed by the local

Governments, and to be in number not more than thirty for a Presidency town, and not more than twenty for a district as constituted under this Act. From the delegates thus appointed are to be chosen in due rotation those who assist at the trial of suits in the matrimonial courts. The appointment of a delegate is to be for life, or until resignation, with the usual provision attached to a judicial office of '*quamdiu se bene gesserit.*' The local Governments, we may be sure, will always be cautious to appoint the most respectable and intelligent Parsis to this office, and I sincerely trust that the position of a delegate may hereafter be an object of honourable ambition to Parsi gentlemen. In suits tried in the matrimonial courts all questions of law and procedure will be determined by the presiding judge, but the decision on the facts is to be the decision of the majority of the delegates assisting at the trial. Should such be the wish of either party to the suit, the case may be heard with closed doors. The procedure is to be as far as possible that of the code of civil procedure, and an appeal will lie from the decisions of all matrimonial courts, whether chief or district, to Her Majesty's High Court of Judicature.

"Now, I think that the courts which it is thus proposed to establish will exactly attain the objects which the Bill had in view. All suits for the declaration of nullity of marriages, for dissolution on account of desertion, for divorce and judicial separation, and for restitution of conjugal rights, will in effect be decided by the Parsis themselves; while the presence and active supervision of an experienced judge will be an ample guarantee to the general public, not merely that the investigation will be a fair one—for that, as far as intention goes, would be the result if the matter were left exclusively to the adjudication of the Parsis—but that the complex rules of evidence and the various minutiæ which are involved in the conduct of a trial are duly observed, and, what is an important point with an inexperienced tribunal, that the zeal and ability of advocates have no more than their just weight with those in whom the power of decision is vested." [1]

[1] The Parsi chief matrimonial court at Bombay has now been in existence for nineteen years. That it has worked most satisfactorily

The valuable, lucid, and exhaustive report of the Parsi Law Commission which was presided over by a president at once so able, learned, liberal, and sympathetic as Sir Joseph Arnould, who, during his career on the Bench of the High Court, had won the affec-

will be seen from the address which the Parsi delegates presented to the Honourable Mr. Justice Melvill in the year 1883, when that learned judge retired from the bench, and the reply which he gave thereto. We quote here the address as well as the reply from a newspaper report of the day.

Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai said : "On this occasion, which may possibly be the last when your lordship presides in the Parsi chief matrimonial court, allow me, on behalf of my brother delegates and myself, to address you a few words of cordial farewell. It is now ten years since you first presided in this court, and I am expressing the feeling of the delegates who have during this period assisted your lordship in the investigation of the various cases that have been brought on for trial ; and I may say that your lordship's decisions have throughout been distinguished for impartiality and ability, and for that discretion and that tenderness and sympathy for the feelings and customs of the class of litigants brought before you, which have inspired confidence in this court. In establishing a special court for the determination of matrimonial disputes between Parsis, the Government of India evinced a wise and benign consideration for the special position of the Parsi community in India ; and your lordship has tried to act up to the wise policy thus adopted, in making this tribunal one to which the Parsis might confidently appeal for justice, and where the law would surely find a just and true interpretation, consonant with the manners and sentiments of those for whose benefit this court has been constituted. Considering the delicate, sometimes the painful, nature of the cases brought before your lordship, the administration of justice in this court requires more than in any other tribunal the exercise of high qualities of discretion, tact, and patience, and a more than ordinary amount of experience, in all which your lordship has excelled ; and had it not been for these high qualities and great abilities brought to bear upon such cases, our task would have been one of extreme difficulty. As it was, however, the delegates of this court had always the benefit of your lordship's great attainments, dis-

tion and commanded the respect of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, was forwarded to the Legislative Council of India, strongly recommended by the Government of Bombay, with the suggestion that the draft Acts relating to Parsis, as amended by the Commis-

cretion, and experience, and withal of that courtesy and patience which have made our work in this court so agreeable. For all your kindness to us we take this public occasion to thank you most sincerely; and in bidding you good-bye, we beg you to accept our best wishes for your health and welfare, and for the enjoyment of the repose which you have so well merited by your arduous and assiduous labours. Regretting as we do the occasion of your separation from us, we still hope it may be only temporary, and that you may return soon with renewed health to preside in this court for many and many a year."

Mr. Justice Melvill, in reply, spoke nearly as follows:—"Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai and gentlemen delegates, I am very much obliged to you for your kind sentiments and for your good wishes for my future welfare. As you have observed, the duties of a judge of this court are of a delicate nature, requiring some tact and discretion, but I cannot say they are arduous. I have had a return prepared for me by Mr. Jehangir (the clerk of the court), showing the number and nature of the cases decided during the period I have been its presiding judge; and I find that during a period of ten years there have been in all thirty-one suits, or, on an average, about three suits a year. Now, this is a very small number, and there must be some reason to account for this paucity of suits. It cannot be on account of the expenses of litigation being high. There is Rs.20 stamp for the plaint, and the other fees are proportionately small; so that if a party were to conduct his suit in person he could do it for a less sum than for a suit in the Small Causes Court. It therefore cannot be said that the expense of a suit in our court is heavy, and that parties are restrained thereby from seeking matrimonial relief. Nor can it be said, I think, that our court, as it is constituted, is unpopular. We English are accustomed to think that no court can adjudicate so well on the merits of a case as that which consists of a judge and a jury. Now, the constitution of this court is even superior to a jury; for the gentlemen appointed to assist the court are not selected haphazard, but are appointed after deep and

sion, should be passed into law. His Excellency the Governor in Council was pleased to add what, as a Parsi, the author feels proud in quoting :—" That Her Majesty possesses no subjects who, for loyalty, intelligence, capacity for public duties, liberality, sympathy

mature consideration by the Government, from the *élite* of the Parsi community, for their education, intelligence, and status in their community ; so that the constitution of the court is somewhat after the model of your old Panchayet. Under these circumstances, we must try to find some other causes why there are not more suits instituted in our court. It would suggest itself to every one that this paucity of cases may be accounted for either by the matrimonial relationship between a husband and wife being of a more peaceful and amicable kind among the Parsis than other nations, or that amongst the Parsis there exists in a high degree the feeling that such disputes should be settled out of court, and that friends are ever ready to intervene and amicably settle their differences. It is probable that both these causes operate to a certain extent. From the return I hold in my hand it appears that there have been out of fourteen cases for divorce only three suits in which the husband has succeeded in this court. Now, nothing can be more creditable to the Parsi community than this. It speaks well and highly of the chastity of their women, and can well account for the few cases in our court ; for where the chastity of the women of the community is so high there can be little need for its matrimonial court ; and this in itself is matter for congratulation. There have been eleven cases for restitution of conjugal rights. Now, gentlemen, restitution is unknown in the courts of Europe or America, and is only kept in vogue in England and in this country, as it is incorporated in your Matrimonial Act. I have discussed this subject in a case that came before me some years ago in this court ; and it is not for me to question the wisdom of the Legislature. Still, I must say, it is a most inefficient remedy. A wife who has been compelled to go and live with her husband under the order of a court, and under a threat of imprisonment, can never love him ; and there can be but little happiness between them. Restitution suits are generally instituted for the purpose of satisfying some private pique or spite. Gentlemen, it now only remains for me to thank you in return for your assistance to this court. During the period I have presided over this court I have ever found the delegates

with suffering, and honest admiration for British justice, have a better claim to a full and indulgent consideration of their needs than the Parsi community of Bombay and the Mofussil."

The valuable labours of this Commission resulted in the passing of the Succession and Marriage Acts in the form in which they are given in Appendices B and C. In a work like this relating to the Parsis, who, from the time of their arrival in India up to 1865, a period of twelve hundred years, had no recognised laws to govern their social relations, the author has deemed it right to devote a few pages to tracing the history of the various efforts made from time to time to obtain legislative sanction to their mode of regulating intestate succession and marriage and divorce, and

ready and willing to discharge their duties. They have been always punctual in their attendance, and there has never been an instance in which the administration of justice has been delayed by their non-attendance. I must particularly thank you for the very intelligent interest you have always taken in our deliberations. I have often been struck by the shrewd questions put by delegates to a witness, after he has undergone a rigorous examination, cross-examination, and re-examination by counsel, the answers to which have frequently changed the tenor and worth of the evidence given. It is seldom that I have had to disagree with the verdict of the delegates, and when I had, it is very likely that I was wrong and they were right. And this degree of intelligence is to be expected as long as the selection of delegates continues to be made with such watchful and careful discretion as is happily now the case. Personally I have ever received the greatest courtesy at your hands, and to me it is a matter of regret that this will be the last time I shall sit with you in this court; for although I hope to return, yet even of this I am uncertain; but it is certain that, even if I do return, the arrangements made in my absence will not be disturbed."

also to explaining the grounds upon which the Legislature has been induced to accede to their wishes. In this connection he desires to acknowledge that he is chiefly indebted to the valuable report of Sir Joseph Arnould's Commission, and that he has, in great part, adopted the very language of that admirable document.

Before we conclude this chapter it is but right to record here what the author believes is the general feeling of the entire Parsi community, that the successful result of the efforts of the Parsis in obtaining their laws from the Government was chiefly owing to the zealous and disinterested exertions of the late Mr. Manakji Nasarvanji Petit, the first president of the Parsi Law Association ; and afterwards of his successor in that office, the venerable Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel ; of Mr. Hirjibhai Hormasji Sethna, the vice-president ; and, more particularly, of the two able and zealous honorary secretaries Messrs. Naorozji Fardunji and Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, both well known and respected in the community for their unceasing efforts in everything affecting its welfare. Both these latter gentlemen, it is gratifying to observe, have recently been honoured in recognition of their public worth by Her Majesty the Empress of India by being enrolled as Companions of the order of the Indian Empire.

CHAPTER VI.

EDUCATION.

The original language of the Parsis—Exchanged for Gujarati—Limited education—Effect of contact with Europeans—Slight knowledge of English—Change at beginning of century—The first schools—Mountstuart Elphinstone—His view of education—Fund raised on his departure—Founding of a college bearing his name—Address to him—The Parsis prominent in the matter—Their keen desire for education—The Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Parsi Institution — Its origin — The Government of India accept the trusteeship — The school attendance — The school in Hornby Row — General Waddington's opinion—Progress of the schools—The University —Degrees taken by Parsis—Mr. Dadabhai Naorozji—Parsis as teachers—As physicians — Annual dinner of the Grant Medical College — Parsi engineers—Education now general among all classes—Results of English example—Female education—Dates from 1849—The first girls' school—What used to be taught—The students' literary society—An opportune essay — A similar movement in Calcutta — Mr. Drinkwater Bethune — Strength of the Bombay movement—Messrs. Patton and Reid—Raising a fund—English sympathy—Parsi Girls' School Association—Difficulties of female education in the East — Objection to male teachers — Female teachers — Course of instruction — Books used — Various endowments—New schools—The Education Commission—Views of Dr. Hunter and Mr. Lee-Warner—The promoters of the success of female education—Other schools — The study of English — The Alexandra Native Girls' School Institution—A bazaar—Interest taken by the Queen-Empress—Royal contributors — Opened by the Duke of Edinburgh — Signal success — Unusual spectacle—A national custom—Spread of knowledge of English —Knowledge now general—The Parsis ahead of their neighbours—Their pre-eminence in different pursuits and professions.

Let us now proceed to record in their turn the growth, development, and present condition of education among the Parsis. For a number of years, how long

after they came to India it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty, they adhered to and used their own language, viz. Persian; but as time rolled on they gave it up for Gujarati, the language of the Hindus among whom they dwelt. The education which they subsequently received was imparted to them in that language, and the study of Persian was only followed by a few who obtained the consideration due to scholars from a knowledge of the original tongue of their race. Even in Gujarati the ordinary education among them extended to little beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic.

From the presence and example of Europeans the Parsis derived the first desire for increased knowledge. After they came into contact with Europeans at Surat they commenced to acquire a smattering of English, chiefly because it was necessary to enable them to carry on their business. They seldom attained any great proficiency, and none of them could be said to be tolerably conversant with the English language until the commencement of the present century, when two or three English schools were conducted in Bombay by Eurasians, or soldiers whose time of service in the army had expired. These schools were chiefly attended by Parsis, and this step formed the first educational movement among them. The higher education of the Parsis may be said to date not further back than seventy-five years ago. In

the year 1820 the Bombay Native Education Society was established for the education of native youth under the patronage and auspices of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, at that time Governor of Bombay, who will be always remembered among the most enlightened of English statesmen in the East.

No sooner had he assumed the reins of power than he perceived with the true instinct of a statesman that education was the safest and most efficient way of improving the native mind, that the advancement of the moral and intellectual condition of the people of India would best insure the true prosperity of their country by enabling them to understand and appreciate the character of the rule under which they lived. Looking still further ahead, he may have foreseen a time when, by realising the aim of a beneficent government, the natives would be qualified to participate in the administration of their own country. With Mountstuart Elphinstone's tenure of office the era of enlightened rule in the Western Presidency of India may be said to have commenced. It was by his noble and zealous efforts that ignorance yielded some of its unfruitful possessions to knowledge, if it could not be banished altogether. Then in a little time the languages, literature, science, and philosophy of Europe began to be unfolded before the eyes of an intelligent people too long confined in the outer darkness. The seeds thus sown for the

cultivation of the intellect and for the development of the understanding of the people soon grew into a tree, and the precious fruit which it began to yield from the very commencement was recognised as a benefit, making the further development of the human understanding most desirable.

An opportunity for the fulfilment of their wishes soon presented itself, for on the retirement of Mountstuart Elphinstone from the Governorship of Bombay the natives of the island, among whom the Parsis took a prominent part, subscribed a large sum of money towards a fund for the establishment and maintenance of a college for the education of their countrymen in the higher branches of European science and literature. With this institution they resolved to permanently associate the name of Elphinstone, in commemoration of the very valuable and praiseworthy efforts in their behalf of that great and good man.

We cannot do better than quote here that part of the address presented by the rajas, chiefs, and people of the Bombay Presidency to this benefactor of Western India on his retirement from power, which recognised the incalculable benefits he had conferred upon the people by his encouragement of education, and in gratitude for which they desired in this way to commemorate his name in India. After expressing their admiration, appreciation, and grati-

tude for the many solid advantages his enlightened administration had secured for the people, they said :—

"But permit us, sir, to acquaint you that, in order to evince that we are ourselves fully persuaded that no amelioration can be of more incalculable benefits to this country than the diffusion among our children and countrymen of that extensive knowledge, those noble modes of thinking, those wise and liberal principles of government, and those sublime views of moral rectitude by which the British are so eminently distinguished, we have determined to raise a subscription among ourselves, which at the present moment amounts to two lakhs and fifteen thousand (215,000) rupees, for the purpose of founding one or more professorships for teaching the languages, literature, sciences, and moral philosophy of Europe. Nor can we doubt that you will be pleased to comply with our earnest solicitation that we may be allowed to honour these professorships as a slight testimony of our unceasing gratitude with that name which we so much revere and admire, and to designate them as the Elphinstone Professorships."

This tribute of respect must have been as gratifying to the statesman to whom it was offered as it was honourable to those from whom it emanated ; while at the same time it evinced beyond possibility of misconception the value which education and all it brings in its train possessed in the eyes of the natives of Bombay. This brief sketch of an institution, in the founding of which the Parsis took no insignificant part, and from which they have derived a larger amount of benefit than others, will, it is hoped, be considered not out of place here. Though the Hindus greatly outnumber the Parsis, the number of the latter who receive

instruction at the institution has in many years exceeded that of the former, and has never been known to be less.[1] In fact, it may with truth be said that the Parsis are the most intelligent and persevering of all the races inhabiting India, and that it is only necessary for them to understand the value and advantage of whatever may be offered them to induce them to accept it with eagerness. This has been shown in the case of English education. No Parsi, whose means allow him to do so, will neglect to give his children the benefit of a liberal education. The class-rooms of the Elphinstone Institution are filled with Parsis. The St. Xavier School and College established by the zealous and self-denying Jesuit missionaries, the Free Church and the General Assembly institutions founded by other philanthropic Christian missionaries, as well as the institutions conducted by private enterprise, are all largely attended by Parsis. English and vernacular schools, established by Government in the different towns in the Mofussil wherever there are Parsis, are freely resorted to by them. It may be said, indeed, that the Parsis are in comparison benefiting themselves more largely than any of their neighbours through the education provided by the State and other agencies. They are convinced

[1] We leave out the Mahomedans altogether from our calculation, as, until recently, they never troubled their heads at all about English education.

that the time has arrived when without a sound and liberal English education no Parsi can hold his own, whatever may be his position without it by reason of birth or wealth. The poorest of the community also participate in the benefits of education. In this connection it is right to give prominent notice to a noble institution, the name of which will be familiar to those who have been in Bombay, and indeed to those also who have watched from a distance the progress of education in this Presidency. We allude to the Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Parsi Benevolent Institution, which was founded by a Parsi; and as it is maintained and managed exclusively by Parsis for their own race, a short account of its origin and objects will not be uninteresting to the reader.

In the year 1842, when Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai was raised to the dignity of knighthood, the Parsis were highly gratified at the mark of honour bestowed upon one of their number. They considered it their paramount duty to offer publicly their sincere congratulations to the man who had, by his well-known public spirit and generous application of the means placed by Providence at his disposal, not only earned honour for himself but reflected credit on the race of which he was a member.

The Parsis accordingly presented a handsome testimonial to Sir Jamshedji accompanied by an address, in which they said :—

"To commemorate this auspicious event we request your permission to apply a sum of money which we have subscribed in forming a fund to be designated 'Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Translation Fund,' and to be vested in trustees for the purpose of being appropriated in defraying the expenses of translating into the Gujarati language such books from the European and Asiatic languages, whether ancient or modern, as may be approved of by the committee, to be by them published and distributed gratis or at a low price among the Parsi community, in furtherance of the education of our people, of which you have ever been a warm friend and zealous patron."

Sir Jamshedji's reply to this address will clearly explain the origin of the institution which now bears his illustrious name. He said:—

"Nothing could please me more than the purposes to which you propose to devote the funds that have been subscribed. I shall ever wish my name to be connected with every endeavour to diffuse knowledge amongst our people; and the surest way to incite them to elevate and improve themselves, to fit them to appreciate the blessings of the Government under which they live, and to deserve those honours which have now, for the first time, been extended to India, is to spread far and wide amongst them, gratuitously or in a cheap form, translations into our own language of the works of the most approved authors. Connected with this subject is a scheme that I have long contemplated for relieving the distresses of the Parsi poor of Bombay, Surat, and its neighbourhood. You know full well the state of misery in which many of our people are living, and hopeless ignorance in which their children are permitted to grow up. My object is to create a fund, the interest of which shall be applied towards relieving the indigent of our people, and the education of their children; and I propose to invest the sum of three hundred thousand rupees in the public securities, and to place it at the disposal of trustees, who with the interest shall carry out the object I have mentioned; and this trust I hope you will take under your care."

To this sum of three hundred thousand rupees the munificent knight further added fifteen shares in the Bank of Bengal. Lady Jamshedji subscribed five, and the Parsi Panchayet thirty-five shares. These further contributions of fifty-five shares were valued at the time at three lakhs and ninety-six thousand rupees (Rs.396,000). The income of the institution, derived from the interest of the sum of three lakhs of rupees, and the dividend on the above-mentioned shares, amounts to not less than forty thousand rupees per annum.

The Government of India, in whom the trusteeship of the funds is vested, allow interest at the rate of six per cent on the endowment of three hundred thousand rupees. The annual income of the institution, after deducting the expenses of management, is divided into four hundred shares, one hundred and eighty of which are devoted to the support of the schools in Bombay, and seventy to that of the schools in Gujarat, while the remaining one hundred and fifty are assigned for the maintenance of poor, aged, and disabled Parsis in Bombay, Surat, and other places, for defraying their funeral expenses, and also for the marriage expenses of their daughters.

The boys' schools in Bombay were first opened on the 17th of October 1849, and the following gentlemen have successively had charge of them down to the present day: — Professor Robert Lott, B.A. Oxford; Professor Henry Green, formerly Principal

of the Elphinstone Institution and College; Professor A. G. Fraser, D.D.; Dr. J. Burgess, now Archæological Surveyor of India; and Mr. Dosabhai Nasarvanji Wadia, M.A., late Senior Fellow, Elphinstone College, Bombay, who has been in charge of the Institution since the 1st of February 1873.

This charity maintains at present four schools for boys and three for girls in Bombay, and eight small schools for girls and seven for boys in different parts of Gujarat.

The four boys' schools in Bombay number on their rolls about eleven hundred pupils, a number unprecedented in the annals of the institution; and the attendance per cent is also very high, being seldom under ninety and often as high as ninety-four. The three girls' schools are attended by about nine hundred girls, the attendance per cent being seventy-eight. The Mofussil schools contain upwards of one thousand children. All the schools of the institution taken together impart the blessings of education free of charge to nearly three thousand boys and girls of the poor belonging to the Parsi community.

The boys' schools are attended by boys varying in age from six to twenty years, who are taught up to the matriculation standard of the local University. The girls' schools are attended by girls of from five to twelve years, who are taught up to the fourth vernacular standard.

Three of the boys' and one of the girls' schools in Bombay are located in a commodious three-storied building in Hornby Row, a broad and conveniently-situated street in that city. The foundation-stone of this building was laid on 21st February 1871 by Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, G.C.S.I., at that time Governor of Bombay; and the opening ceremony was performed on 20th November 1872 by the Earl of Northbrook, Viceroy and Governor-General of India. The building was designed by a Parsi architect, and cost Rs.346,825.

The High School of the institution holds a very prominent place among the high schools of the Presidency. Last year it succeeded in passing at the matriculation examination as many as nineteen out of twenty-one candidates sent up, a much higher proportion than had been obtained by any other school since 1864, the year in which this school first began to send up candidates to the University. One hundred and seventy of its pupils have passed the matriculation examination—fifty-two in ten years under Dr. Burgess, and one hundred and eighteen in ten years under the present Parsi Principal, who takes a great interest in his work, and who has brought the boys' schools into so high a state of efficiency as to elicit from General Waddington, the late Educational Inspector of the Central Division, his strong opinion, expressed to the Managing Committee in 1881, as well as on several

previous occasions, "that their school might certainly rank in teaching, discipline, and general efficiency with any schools of their class in the Presidency." This high opinion is endorsed by Mr. H. P. Jacob, late Principal of the Elphinstone High School, who bore testimony to the success of the schools in the following terms:—

"My general impression of the boys' schools is that they are all in a sound and efficient state.

"The performances of the Central High and Anglo-Vernacular Schools were, as they ought to be, the best; but in all of the schools I observed a scholarly spirit and zeal for work which is unsurpassed in any other institution in Bombay, and which, after perusing the reports of my predecessors, I must regard as a 'tradition' of the institution. I also thought that the moral tone of all the schools, boys' and girls', was most praiseworthy, the respectful and orderly demeanour of the pupils and their conscientious abstention from any attempt to deceive the examiner being especially noticeable."

The schools were recently examined by the present able and zealous Educational Inspector, Mr. T. B. Kirkham, and in his report to the Panchayet or Managing Committee he speaks of the efficiency of the school in terms of high praise, and compliments the zealous Parsi Principal on the beneficial results of his valuable labours. We quote Mr. Kirkham's own words:—

"The inspection of this year had two points of special interest. In the first place, I had not seen the institution for nearly four years, and was thus in a favourable position for judging of the

real direction of its growth; and, in the second place, the date of my visit coincided with the close of the tenth year of the present Principal's tenure of office, and this circumstance naturally invited a retrospective glance over the years 1873 to 1883. It gives me great pleasure to be able to report that both comparisons are highly favourable to the present time. In all parts of the Institution I found the same patient, thoughtful striving after improvement which I noticed in 1879, and a consequent strengthening of all the best features of the school; whilst as regards Mr. Wadia's Principalship it would be difficult to imagine a ten years' history of any scholastic institution with so much to gratify and so little to regret as the history of your Institution as recorded in the official reports of the various Educational Inspectors who have held office during that period. The history appears to be one of unchecked growth, both in numbers, in proficiency in studies, and in character and tone. The Principalship of Mr. Wadia has been an unqualified success.

"I am glad to be able to report to the Panchayet as favourably of the girls' schools as I have done of the boys'. All these schools have been most carefully superintended by Mr. Nanabhai Nasarvanji, and all three are conspicuously efficient. The course of study is as yet exclusively vernacular, but in their own language the girls acquire a high degree of intelligence and large funds of information.

"With regard to the important question of manners and tone I paid a 'visit of surprise' to the Central Institution at half-past nine one morning, and observed the assembling of the pupils in all parts of the building and their intercourse with one another till the school bell struck at half-past ten. The boys appeared to be healthy and happy, active and full of spirits without being turbulent, whilst the manners of the girls, who assembled by means of special staircases, were charming.

"It is with great pleasure that I find myself able to submit a report so uniformly favourable as the above to the Panchayet, and to endorse so completely the judgments recently recorded by General Waddington and Mr. H. P. Jacob. The present satisfactory state of the Institution has not been attained without constant and conscientious hard work. It has been a great advantage to have at the head for so many years continuously

a Principal who has succeeded in impressing his individuality upon every part of the Institution."

Of the one hundred and seventy pupils who have passed into the University from this Institution, two are now Masters of Arts occupying responsible positions; one is a Bachelor of Laws, practising as a High Court pleader; two are Bachelors of Science as well as of Arts, one of whom is employed in a college at Madras, and the other is reading for the M.D. examination of the Bombay University. There are three Bachelors of Arts; eleven are Licentiates of Medicine and Surgery, one of them being a member of the Indian Medical Service, and two assistant surgeons in the service of Government. Three are Licentiates of Civil Engineering, two are reading in London for the Indian Medical Service, three have passed the first examination for the degree of B.A., two have passed the previous examination, five have passed the first examination in medicine, and one the first examination in civil engineering. Of the rest, some are prosecuting their further studies at the different colleges in Bombay and Poona, and others are employed as teachers, clerks, and in other similar capacities.

Of those who leave the Institution without coming up to the matriculation standard, some join different trades as apprentices, others obtain employment in banks, mills, and mercantile offices, and on the

railways; while others adopt the profession of newspaper reporters.

Many also of those who belonged to the Institution previous to the establishment of the University have attained positions of respectability, for which they are chiefly indebted to the education they received there.

This is a brief account of an Institution without which the children of indigent members of the Parsi community would have been deprived of the benefits of education. It may be styled one of the noblest of the numerous monuments which are to be seen in the Bombay Presidency, testifying to the enlightened liberality of the first Parsi baronet, the late Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai.

In connection with the subject of Parsi education we must not omit to mention that several Parsi High Schools have been established in the city of Bombay by educated Parsis. The chief of these are the Fort High School and the Fort Proprietary School. The number of Parsi boys on the roll of the first is six hundred and fifty, and on the second five hundred and fifty. Both these schools are considered highly efficient. They pass annually a large number of pupils at the matriculation examination of the Bombay University, and have always been favourably reported upon by the Government Educational Inspectors who have periodically examined them.

Within the last forty years the Parsis have made remarkable progress in all branches of education. A few years after the establishment of the Elphinstone Institution and College a large number of the Parsi youth educated within its walls began to occupy useful positions in the community, and some obtained distinguished posts in the Institution and College. Mr. Dadabhai Naorozji was the first native of India appointed to the chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Referring to his appointment, the Board of Education, in its report to Government, said :—

"We gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity of confirming Mr. Dadabhai Naorozji as Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, the duties of which he had been performing to our entire satisfaction for nearly two years. We feel sure that the distinction he has thus won by a long and laborious devotion to mathematical studies, and by an able discharge of his duties in the Institution, will stimulate him to still greater exertions. Much will depend upon the result of this first nomination of a native of India to be a professor in the Elphinstone Institution. The honour conferred upon him is great, but the responsibility attached to it is still greater. It is now twenty-eight years since the subject of the Elphinstone professorships first came under consideration, with the view of commemorating the high sense entertained by the natives of Western India of the public and private character of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, on his retirement from the Government of this Presidency. At a public meeting, held in the library of the Native Education Society in August 1827, a resolution was unanimously passed that the most appropriate and durable plan for accomplishing this object would be to found professorships for teaching 'the English language and the arts, the sciences, and literature of Europe.'

In the resolution which was thus adopted it was further declared that these professorships should bear the name of him in whose honour they were founded, and a hope was expressed that the happy period would arrive when natives of this country would be found qualified for holding them. This expressed hope has ever been borne in mind. It was therefore with no ordinary feeling of satisfaction that we felt ourselves justified in nominating Mr. Dadabhai Naorozji to the chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy—a measure so entirely in accordance with both the letter and spirit of the resolution."

Several other Parsis have obtained the posts of assistant professors and masters, and many have found employment in the public and other services. At the present day most of the Parsis who occupy high positions in the Government service or who are distinguishing themselves in various walks of life are Elphinstonians. Since the establishment of the Bombay University in the year 1857 over a thousand Parsis have passed the matriculation examination, a large number have taken the B.A. degree, and a good many have passed the M.A. examination as well as that of LL.B. In the public service we have Parsi members of the Covenanted Civil Service, who have obtained the rich prize by open competition in England with English youths.[1] There are also Parsi magistrates, Parsi Revenue officers, Parsi judges, Parsi engineers, and Parsi surgeons and physicians. All these results

[1] It will be pertinent to state here that a Parsi gentleman, Mr. Mancherji Pestanji Kharegat, occupied the first place at the final examination in 1884 of those who passed the competitive examination of 1882.

may be taken as the surest index of the state of education among the Parsis. The rising generation of Parsis are all receiving an English education, be they rich or poor. Within the last twenty-five years a number of Parsis have been sent to England for their education, in order to qualify themselves for the liberal professions. One of the first natives of Western India who went to England to qualify himself for practice at the bar was a Parsi, Mr. Phirozsha Mervanji Mehta, a distinguished graduate of the Bombay University, who, though still young in years, has, by his ability and public spirit, not only acquired considerable rank at the local bar, but has also attained a high position in the general community. He is at present Chairman of the Municipal Corporation of the city of Bombay.

The Parsis are not only very quick learners but they have shown remarkable aptitude in imparting instruction, although the language employed is not their own. They conduct high schools very successfully. Out of numerous instances the name may be mentioned of Mr. Jamshedji Ardeshir Dalal, who has held the post of Vice-Principal of the Elphinstone High School with much distinction. The principal of the Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Parsi Benevolent Institution, which is attended by over one thousand boys, is Mr. Dosabhai Nasarvanji Wadia, a distinguished Parsi graduate of the Bombay University, and we

have in a previous page quoted the high opinion expressed by the Government educational authorities of the efficiency of the school under his charge. The Fort Proprietary School, the Fort High School, and some other high schools are all conducted by Parsi head-masters with a staff composed mostly of Parsi teachers. The number of boys whom they pass annually at the matriculation examination is highly creditable not only to their own education but to their teaching capacities.

When the opportunity of medical instruction was first afforded in Bombay the Parsis were eager to take advantage of it. The Grant Medical College was opened in that city in the year 1845, and from that date up to the present time a very large number of Parsis have qualified themselves as physicians and surgeons. Fourteen have entered the Indian Medical Service by successfully passing the competitive examination in London.

One of them, Mr. Dhanjisha Naorozji Parakh, has recently been appointed by Sir James Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, to the professorial chair of midwifery in the Grant Medical College, and to the post of surgeon to the obstetric ward of the Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Hospital. The Parsis are naturally proud of and much gratified at these appointments, inasmuch as the first native of India on whom such a distinction has been conferred is one of their own race.

In recent years a movement has been successfully made to train young girls in the science of medicine, and already ten are receiving regular medical education side by side with their male fellow-students. Of these four are Parsi girls, who have boldly faced the difficulty, not only of going through a course of lectures on all branches of this noble science, but of overcoming all caste and social embarrassments. It is most creditable to the Parsi nation that, of the numerous races to be found in Bombay, four Parsi girls have ventured to join a medical college for the first time in the history of native education. The significance of this step is increased by the fact that the rest of the pupils are Europeans.

The students of the Grant Medical College have lately established the commendable practice of holding an annual dinner in the beginning of the spring of each year. To the last dinner which was recently held they invited their sister students, who graciously accepted their hospitality. The decorum with which the dinner and its subsequent proceedings, accompanied by music and singing, were conducted augured a bright and happy future for the cause of female education among the Parsis.

When the Engineering College was opened the Parsis hastened to utilise its advantages, and a large number have since become licentiates of civil engineering. The post of executive engineer at the

Presidency town of Bombay, an office of great responsibility, is at present held by a Parsi gentleman, Mr. Mancherji Kavasji Marzban.[1]

Nor have the Parsis been backward in taking advantage of the openings thus created for them in several professions. There are Parsi barristers-at-law, attorneys and solicitors, pleaders, and "vakils." Indeed in every profession Parsis are prominent throughout Western India.

Recently Parsis have availed themselves of the Agricultural School established in Madras, and about a dozen students have successfully passed the final examination in that institution. They have been employed either as tutors or as superintendents of agriculture in different parts of India, including Native States. We are also able to state that one or two Parsis have for the first time qualified themselves as veterinary surgeons.

When the educational movement first commenced among the Parsis under the auspices of the Bombay Native Education Society the majority of those who took advantage of it belonged to the middle and the poorer classes. The rich did not show any great disposition to send their sons to the only institution

[1] This gentleman was publicly thanked by His Excellency Sir James Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, for his admirable management during the reception of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who also expressed their satisfaction with the arrangements.

which at that time could impart a sound education. They preferred to send them to private schools which, although very inefficient, kept them from mixing with the boys of less favoured classes. But when they discovered that the Elphinstone Institution turned out scholars who were far better educated than their own sons they recognised their mistake, and at once hastened to avail themselves of its superior advantages. In the early years of this century wealthy Parsis, being themselves not well educated, thought their sons would, without any change, continue to be as rich and as happy as they had been. They were soon undeceived. They had to realise the fact that, if they did not leave their sons a better legacy than gold, they would be unable to keep their place in society, while the educated and enlightened members, although belonging to the middle and less wealthy classes, would take precedence of them in every way. About the middle of the present century, all their old prejudices, therefore, had been removed, and they freely sent their sons to public schools. At the present day the sons of the rich, as well as of the middle and poorer classes of Parsis, are all honourably vying with each other in imbibing the useful lessons to be derived from the science and literature of the West. That education has exercised, and will continue to exercise, a great influence for good on the

Parsis is a fact which cannot be controverted. The difference between the Parsis of fifty years ago and those of the present day is all the result of English education and of intercourse with Englishmen.

Our educated men have, almost without exception, been remarkable for the purity of their conduct, while the disinterestedness of their views, their honesty of purpose, their love for their countrymen, and their high moral courage have excited unanimous praise from all who have been brought into contact with them. To spread generally among their less fortunate brethren the enlightenment and knowledge which they have received through the means provided by a beneficent Government has been their constant aim and the highest object of their ambition.

A noble band of educated Parsis, most of whom received their education in the Elphinstone Institution and College, have effected, by their disinterested exertions, a great change in the condition of Parsi society. By the establishment of girls' schools, by the publication of cheap newspapers and magazines, and by public lectures, all more or less calculated to impart information and knowledge to the masses, they have worked such an extraordinary change in the character of their race that whatever we could say in praise of the exertions of the youthful innovators would be inadequate to express our sense of what they have done. We are content to say that

they have fully succeeded in awakening in the minds of their countrymen a perception of the necessity of a general and rapid advance in the paths of knowledge and enlightenment, if they desire to rank among the civilised nations of the earth.

The Parsis are now acting in this spirit, and they have only to continue to do so for another age to produce, under God's blessing, no insignificant results. Even to-day those seeking instruction and enlightenment are not confined within the walls of the schools. At the meetings of the literary societies, at public lectures, and in libraries large numbers of Parsis are always to be seen acquiring information in every shape, and from whatever source it can be obtained. Much good is expected from this thirst for knowledge, as the effect of English education upon the Parsis generally will be to raise them still higher in the scale of civilisation.

The history of female education among the Parsis is very interesting. We have said already that the exertions of the educated Parsi youth have worked a great change in the condition of Parsi society. Foremost among these we place the establishment of girls' schools in the year 1849, from which date female education among the Parsis can only be said to have commenced. Before that Parsi ladies of the upper classes knew how to read and write a little Gujarati, which is their vernacular. The Parsis of old, follow-

ing the example of the Hindus and Mahomedans, among whom they dwelt, did not make the least effort to educate their women. They did not see the advantages of doing so. What does a woman want to learn for? they may have asked as others have. She has not to go out like men in order to earn her bread. It was thus they replied to any question which might be put concerning female education. In those days people generally thought that the extreme limit to which female education should extend was to teach their wives and daughters to scrawl letters, in order that they might be able to write out a list of clothes before sending them to the washerman or laundress; to understand the daily bazaar expenses, which, if they exceeded five rupees, would pass the limits of their comprehension; and to read the name and residence of their husbands or fathers on a small bit of paper when it was sent from the market with the fuel or corn. There might have been a few exceptions of clever ladies, but the three acquirements of "reading, writing, and arithmetic" were luxuries indeed, and the possessor was envied on account of her superior training.

A great change, however, at last began to take place. The young men who had been educated in Government schools and colleges viewed the question of female education in its proper light. They felt the mental inferiority of their better halves. They

plainly saw that their own domestic life could not be rendered happy if their wives remained uneducated, nor could the Parsi community be said to have made any great advance from a moral or social point of view if their women continued in a state only worthy of a semi-barbarous age and society. They perceived that, if the seeds of education were to be generally spread, they should first germinate with the gentler sex. The influence which a mother or sister exercises upon a child was fully appreciated, and the youths, perhaps enthusiastically, determined to do some service to their country and countrymen by earnestly directing their attention to the cause of female education.

The Students' Literary and Scientific Society[1] proved the great medium for the exposition of the feelings and sentiments of these young men. Numerous essays on the social condition of the women of India were read there, and the necessity of education as a means of raising them in the social scale was emphatically pointed out. Discussions on these subjects appeared in newspapers, magazines, and afterwards in lectures to the vernacular branches of the

[1] This society was composed of professors, masters, students, and ex-students of the Elphinstone Institution. It was in a somewhat languishing condition before the arrival of Professors Patton and Reid. On their joining the society a new life and impetus were given to it. Forty-six students, Parsis as well as Hindus, were members. In the first session, after Professors Patton and Reid had joined the society, twenty meetings were held, at which thirty-five essays were read and discussed, most of the questions treated being of a social character.

society mentioned. The most energetic of the educated Parsis never allowed any opportunity to be lost of sifting and bringing prominently forward the question of female education, and of impressing its advantages on the people.

Still nothing had practically been done beyond some effort made by an individual husband or father to teach his wife or daughter. To the society we have named the Parsis of Bombay are indebted for a systematic scheme for the education of their daughters. Numerous essays, which were read on this much-discussed subject, had prepared the minds of the public for action; and the last of them came when every one was eager, if not ready, to commence the good work.[1] The evening on which this essay was read may be deemed the proudest in the history of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. When the reading was concluded the members present proceeded to the consideration of the necessary measures for the consummation of their long-cherished desires.

They rightly thought that there had been suffi-

[1] "Beramji Kharshedji Ghandhi's essay came in proper time. It was brimful of enthusiasm. His earnest appeal—accompanied, in the impressive Oriental style, with a prayer to the Almighty—to do something met with a hearty response. 'Let every student here present use his influence with the members of his own family to get one pupil at least.' 'Yes,' responded scores of voices. 'Let us teach the schools ourselves, and show that we are in earnest.' 'Yes! yes!' exclaimed all."—*Report of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society for* 1854-55.

cient talking, and that the time had arrived for action. Accordingly the work was inaugurated that very evening. But the first and essential question to be answered was, Could anything be done without pecuniary aid? This difficulty was also overcome. Several members of the society not only volunteered to act as teachers but offered apartments in their own houses as temporary schoolrooms. The hours of instruction were fixed from seven till ten A.M., so that the other avocations of the volunteer teachers might not be interfered with.

Under this arrangement four Parsi girls' schools were opened on the 22d of October 1849, and on the first day forty-four pupils attended.

It must be mentioned that about this time, when the question of female education was attracting the greatest attention in Bombay, a new stimulus came from an unexpected quarter. It happened that the cause of female education was being advocated in Calcutta, at the same time, with a spirit and eloquence almost unprecedented by the late Mr. Drinkwater Bethune, at that time law member of the Legislative Council of India. His large-hearted munificence and broad views seemed to promise for Eastern India the commencement of an era of increased happiness and knowledge. In Bombay his example and exertions roused to action the spirit of youthful patriots. In that city they had no high official to back them

up, as Mr. Bethune did their fellow-labourers in Calcutta, but it was perhaps all the better that it was so. Official support might have contributed a bright light at the beginning, dazzled many, and attracted the people by the novelty; but with all these aids female education would have remained an exotic plant. There would have been wanting the stability and strength against accidents which are so conspicuous in an indigenous system. It was said that the movement initiated by the Students' Society in the cause of female education was scarcely likely to succeed, as it was not assisted by the prestige of rank and of political and social influence, as was the case in Bengal under Mr. Bethune. That prestige of this description is very powerful in India and everywhere else nobody can dispute, but in a matter like the establishment of female schools—a matter in which the sensitive prejudices of the people had to be encountered—it was considered far wiser to let the project originate with and be carried out by the people themselves, and the result showed the wisdom of that course of proceeding. As soon as Mr. Bethune left Calcutta the cause of female education in Bengal collapsed, while the girls' schools established in Bombay by the Students' Society for both Parsis and Hindus prospered. The two races so long connected in India combined on this subject, and simultaneously with

the Parsi members of the society the Hindu members also took up with laudable zeal the question of the education of their young women. They also taught gratuitously in the Marathi schools, which were established at the same time as the Parsi. The professors of the Elphinstone Institution, who were connected with the Students' Society, took great interest in these endeavours; and their encouragement and guidance contributed in no small degree to their success. The future generation of Parsi women will ever remember the names of Patton and Reid with gratitude and respect.

For the first six months instruction in the schools was given by volunteer teachers, and well and creditably did they perform the task which they had accepted of their own accord. The following well-deserved eulogy was passed upon their labours in the first report of the society :—

"The prudence and caution which these youthful reformers displayed in applying themselves to the laborious details of their self-imposed task were as admirable as the generous enthusiasm which sustained them throughout its performance. Carefully did they prepare themselves for their duties, by reading every work on practical education within their reach, and by holding frequent meetings to consider how they might best instruct the children that were entrusted to their care. Their design was not simply to teach reading and writing, but to give such an education as would have an influence on the whole character."

The schools being thus firmly established, the

advantages resulting from them were at once perceived by those who visited them. The efficient practical working of the schools made a stronger impression on the minds of the people than the long talk of years had done. Men not wanting in liberality of sentiment, and ready of purse, now came forward to assist in the good and noble cause which a few youthful reformers had undertaken with such admirable foresight and unselfishness. The first pecuniary aid received towards the maintenance of the schools was from four Parsi gentlemen, whose names, at their special request, were not publicly given out at the time. They loved to do "good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame." Latterly, however, their names transpired, and they are well worth preserving in these pages as those of the first Parsis through whose pecuniary assistance, seasonably given, the girls' schools of their community were placed on a sure and solid foundation. Hope in the success and endurance of the schools then increased, and all the facts encouraged the brightest anticipations.

Messrs. Nasarvanji Mancherji Kama, Framji Nasarvanji Patel, Dhanjibhai Nasarvanji Kama, and Kharshedji Nasarvanji Kama were the energetic and large-minded gentlemen who performed the good work. They placed at the disposal of the Committee a sum of Rs.4,800, to be expended in maintaining the schools

then opened for a period of two years, at the expiration of which time it was thought "the public would not willingly let them die."

The benefits arising from these schools were within a short period fully appreciated by the Parsis, and the number attending them in the second year of their establishment greatly exceeded that in the first year. The European residents of the place also began to take a warm interest in the undertaking. Men like the late Sir Erskine Perry, the indefatigable President of the late Board of Education, and many other influential gentlemen, not only interested themselves in the promotion of the object by presenting liberal donations but greatly contributed by their advice and encouragement to complete the success of the scheme.

In the second year of their foundation these schools were already viewed in the light of valuable public institutions. Their progress and success were watched with peculiar interest, and the care and prudence with which their affairs were managed by the original society afforded an additional security towards the accomplishment of the great end for which they were brought into being. In the year 1851 the Government of Lord Falkland regarded the spontaneous institution of these schools "as an epoch in the history of education in the Bombay Presidency, from which, it was hoped, would in due

time be traced the commencement of a rapid, marked, and constant progress."[1]

These schools were conducted by the Managing Committee of the Students' Society till the year 1857, when the Parsis, who had become thoroughly alive to the advantages of female education, offered to take into their charge the schools of their own denomination, and to provide funds for their permanent maintenance. The offer was cordially accepted by the Students' Society; and a Parsi Girls' School Association was formed for the purpose of taking over these schools. So great was the enthusiasm displayed that, in addition to the funds received from the Students' Society, fifteen thousand rupees[2] were subscribed in a few days

[1] The services this society has rendered to the natives of India are thus acknowledged by the Honourable the Court of Directors in their despatch to the Bombay Government :—

"We regard with special interest the efforts made by the Students' Literary and Scientific Society for the mental improvement of their countrymen and countrywomen."

[2] We here subjoin the names of those who subscribed five hundred rupees and upwards.

Framji Nasarvanji Patel	Rs. 2,000
Manakji Nasarvanji Petit	1,000
Kharshedji Nasarvanji Kama	1,000
Beramji Jijibhai	1,000
Bamanji Framji Kama	1,000
Dhanjibhai Nasarvanji Kama	1,000
Jehangir Nasarvanji Wadia	1,000
Sunabai Nasarvanji Kama	1,000
Pestanji Framji Kama	500
Dosabhai Framji Kama	500
Dosabhai Hormasji Kama	500
Pestanji Hormasji Kama	500
Sorabji Pestanji Framji	500

for their better maintenance. If so much was accomplished by a society of young students and ex-students, the reader can imagine how much more would be expected to result from the new impetus that was given to the cause by the action of the leaders of the Parsi community. Those expectations have been fully realised, and the Managing Committee of the Parsi Girls' School Association have done what they could to promote the best interests of the schools entrusted to their care. Originally all the girls were educated free of charge, but from the year 1862 the parents of well-to-do Parsis were required to pay a monthly fee of one rupee for each pupil, while the daughters of the poorer classes were admitted free. Subsequently in the year 1873 the Managing Committee abolished all free admissions. A fee of eight annas was levied per month from every girl whose parents' means would not allow a higher payment. Thus eleemosynary instruction has been totally discontinued in the female schools belonging to the Parsi Girls' School Association, although the schools of the Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Parsi Benevolent Institution, some of which are in the neighbourhood of those belonging to the Association, continue to impart instruction to most of the pupils free of charge.

One great drawback to the spread of female education among the Parsis almost to the present day is that the girls do not continue their attendance at

school after the age of eleven or twelve, owing to their early marriage or from the fact that the tutors in the schools are men. The latter ground of objection has, however, been entirely removed, so far as the schools of the Parsi Girls' School Association are concerned, for they have supplied the means of female instruction by members of the same sex. For several years the Committee gave unceasing attention to this subject with the view of remedying the one great defect in the means of female education. They have, by offering various inducements and encouragements, succeeded in training a considerable number of female teachers, and all the schools in their charge have now been placed under the conduct and management of young Parsi ladies, who perform their duties most satisfactorily and creditably. Girls are consequently permitted by their parents without any apprehension to remain three or four years longer in the schools than they did before. There are altogether in the three schools seventeen lady teachers, and the inspectress of the schools is a Parsi lady.

Instruction is imparted in these schools through the medium of the Gujarati language in arithmetic, reading, and writing, useful knowledge and needlework adapted to Parsi females, the principles of morality according to the religion of Zoroaster, grammar, geography, and the histories of India and Persia.

Instruction in the principles of morality and religion forms an important feature in the system of education imparted in these schools. In addition to this important subject the Committee have introduced songs and ballads composed expressly for their schools, inculcating social duties and moral precepts. Four of the class-books used in these schools have been expressly compiled for the use of the pupils. In addition to these, Hope's excellent series of Gujarati class-books[1] have been introduced in them. These books were prepared while he held the appointment of Educational Inspector in the northern division of the Presidency, by that distinguished member of the Bombay Civil Service, the Honourable T. C. Hope, now a member of the Council of the Viceroy of India. This excellent series of school-books has been invaluable in all Gujarati schools in Western India.

Thus, during the interval of a quarter of a century which has elapsed since the establishment of these

[1] The following is the course of studies in the highest class :—

Reading, with explanation, Hope's 7th Gujarati book, poetry with explanation and paraphrase, recitation of select passages from the best Gujarati poets ; grammar, parsing, original composition and writing from dictation ; moral and religious lessons from the most approved Zoroastrian books ; geography—particularly geography of India, Asia, and Europe ; history—rudiments of the ancient history of Persia, and modern history of India ; popular general knowledge on various subjects and on natural objects ; arithmetic—rule of three, compound proportion, interest, and vulgar and decimal fractions ; needlework—Berlin wool and net-work, embroidery and plain sewing, and knitting.

schools, the Committee have succeeded in imparting solid instruction in different branches of knowledge to thousands of girls, and in improving the intellectual and social condition of the rising generation of Parsi females.

The schools are very popular among the Parsis, as will be seen from the numerous permanent endowments[1] founded in connection with them by liberal-

[1] I. A permanent endowment of Rs.2,240 bestowed by a generous Parsi lady, the interest of which is applied annually for the purpose of awarding two scholarships of the monthly value of Rs.4 each to the successful competitors declared by the examiners appointed by the Committee,—such scholarships to be held for a period of one year; and an annual prize of Rs.16 to the girl standing next in rank and attainments to the successful competitors.

II. An endowment of Rs.10,000 bestowed by Bai Dhanbaiji in commemoration of her husband, the late Dhanjibhai Nasarvanji Kama, the interest of which is annually applied by the Committee for the purpose of awarding annually a prize of the value of Rs.100 to the girl who is certified and declared by the examiners nominated by the Committee to be the best qualified for performing the duties of a tutoress or instructress of Parsi girls.

III. An endowment of Rs.5,600 bestowed by Framji Nasarvanji Patel, President of the Association, the interest of which is annually applied by the Committee for the purpose of awarding each year "The Framji Nasarvanji Scholarship," of the monthly value of Rs.7, to the successful competitor for proficiency in general knowledge and in the principles of Zoroastrian religion, morality, and domestic economy.

IV. An endowment of Rs.2,100 bestowed by the students and ex-students of the Elphinstone Institution and College in commemoration of their benefactor, the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, the interest of which is applied for the purpose of awarding each year a scholarship, designated "The Mountstuart Elphinstone Scholarship," of the monthly value of Rs.7, to the successful competitor declared by the examiners appointed by the Committee.

V. An endowment of Rs.12,000 given by the relatives of Bai

hearted ladies and gentlemen with the view of affording encouragement to girls to prosecute their studies in these schools.

The Association has recently received most valuable aid in furtherance of its objects. It had laboured

Avabai, late wife of Mr. Kharshedji Rastamji Kama, a member of the Managing Committee, the interest of which is applied annually for the purpose of awarding a scholarship of the monthly value of Rs.10 to a female student of the highest class, as well as for defraying the salaries of one or more female teachers employed in the schools of the Association.

VI. An endowment of Rs.1,500 given by the members of the Managing Committee for founding a scholarship of the monthly value of Rs.5, to be called "The Naorozji Fardunji Scholarship," in commemoration of the services rendered to the Parsi Girls' School Association by him as its honorary secretary for the period of seven years.

VII. An endowment of Rs.1,000 bestowed by the Lady Frere Testimonial Committee of Native Ladies in honour of Lady Frere, the income of which is applied by the Managing Committee for the purpose of awarding annually one or two prizes to the best pupils of the schools, called "The Lady Frere Prize."

VIII. An endowment of Rs.1,500 given by Mr. Dadabhai Naorozji, late Professor of the Elphinstone College, in commemoration of his late mother, Bai Manakbai, the income of which is annually applied for the purpose of awarding a scholarship, called "The Manakbai Scholarship," of the monthly value of Rs.5, to the girl that comes out best in the competitive examination in general proficiency in the principles of the Zoroastrian religion, morality, and history.

IX. An endowment of Rs.1,000 bestowed by the late Sir Kavasji Jehangir, Kt., for giving an annual prize of Rs.45, called "The Temple Prize," in commemoration of the late Governor Sir Richard Temple.

X. An endowment of Rs.1,000 given by the sons of the late Mr. Kavasji Dhanjibhai Paovalla in memory of their deceased mother, the interest of which is applied towards the expenses of giving instruction in the principles and morality of Zoroastrian religion.

XI. An endowment of Rs.1,500 given by the relatives and friends of the late Mr. Edalji Darasha Sethna for giving three annual prizes of Rs.20 each.

under a great disadvantage owing to the want of suitable and convenient accommodation for its schools, particularly for the largest school in the Fort. This want has recently been supplied by the liberality of Mr. Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, C.I.E., a member of the Managing Committee. In one of the populous localities in the Fort he is building at his own cost a fine, commodious, and airy two-storied schoolhouse, estimated to cost about Rs.90,000, including the Government grant of Rs.30,000, in perpetuation of the name of his beloved mother, Bai Bhikhaiji Shapurji Bengali. This edifice is to be made over in trust to the Association for the use of the Fort school. Mr. Sorabji Shapurji Bengali has always been a great promoter and staunch friend of female education. It was through his personal exertions and by his pecuniary assistance that the Committee of the Girls' School Association was able to rear up a class of female teachers, by whom the schools are now greatly benefited.

When the Education Commission appointed by the Government of Lord Ripon was sitting in Bombay the Managing Committee collected the girls of all their schools in the Framji Kavasji Institute with the view of giving the members of the Commission an opportunity of seeing the schools and explaining to them the principles upon which they were conducted, and the state in which they were. The

Education Commission were gratified beyond expectation with what they heard and saw, and the learned President, the Hon. Dr. W. W. Hunter, and Mr. W. Lee-Warner, an accomplished and distinguished member of the Bombay Civil Service, who was also a member of the Commission, were pleased to express the great satisfaction they felt in seeing the schools and the progress they had made. We cannot do better than quote here their interesting remarks as a valuable testimony of those most competent to judge of the labours of the Parsi Girls' School Association.

Dr. Hunter, after a few preliminary observations, said :—

"There are two or three points in your address to which I should like for a moment to allude. In the first place, I was much struck by your system of training up your own teaching staff. You educate little girls; then you select the most promising of those girls and train them as teachers; finally, you take the best of your teachers and appoint them your head-mistresses and your inspectress of schools. You have asked the Commission to recommend the establishment of a Normal Female School. Well, I hope when such a school is established it will produce as efficient teachers, as able head-mistresses, and as admirable a lady inspectress as this school has done. (Cheers.) I was also pleased to find that you had carried education beyond the eleemosynary stage. That you give instruction, not as a charitable dole, but as a thing worth paying for, and one for which you insist upon payment. This success has been obtained, not by any aid from the State, nor even by rich endowments. You began, ladies and gentlemen, by giving your own personal exertions as unpaid teachers; and you have prospered because you deserved to prosper. But what has impressed me most of

all are the thousand happy young faces around me. You are doing the truest work of female education. You are teaching little children to grow up into happy and intelligent girls, so that they may hereafter develop into good and sympathetic women."

Mr. Lee-Warner said:—

"This institution is a remarkable proof that public sympathy is not withheld from female education. It is entirely self-supporting, and I shall detain your attention for a few minutes in pointing out the salient features which have made the Parsi Girls' School Association so successful. I notice in your address four great points. The first is, that as you have undertaken the education of your own daughters you have solved the religious difficulty. Education in morality and the cherished religious principles of religion is essential to the formation of the character of the rising generation. The State, bound by the principle of religious neutrality, cannot introduce into its curriculum religious instruction. You, however, make 'religious lessons in the most approved Zoroastrian books' part of your course, and thus you train your little girls to be mothers who can instil into the minds of their children the truths which you cherish. There is another great advantage in parents conducting the education of the children of their own community. You, gentlemen of the Committee, have in your address deprecated the system of early marriages. As practical teachers you feel the objection to a social custom which as parents and as leaders of the community you can hereafter help to remove by forcing a strong public opinion on the matter. This is the advantage of getting classes of the community to manage their own affairs, and direct their own educational movements. They learn to look at practices from several points of view. They are parents and also teachers, and what they feel in the latter capacity they can enforce in the former. It will be a grand revolution when you are able to realise in ordinary life what you have expressed as managers of an educational institution, namely, that early marriages take children into the hardships of life before they are intellectually and morally fitted to bear the strain. The second point refers

to your system of inspection and teaching. You have brought into practice theories and recommendations which we are constantly hearing debated in evidence. You have an inspectress, and none but female teachers. What is the use of discussing *à priori* the question of the possible advantage of employing female teachers and inspectresses when we are able here to see how the system works? You attribute much of your success to this measure, and I believe you are right. Then, again, I call attention to your course of primary instruction. The Commission has been told in other parts of India that anything more than the barest instruction in the three R's is impractical and unsettling. Well, you who are practical men carry the primary instruction of your daughters up to grammar, original composition, geography, history, arithmetic, and general knowledge of natural objects. If this extended curriculum unsettled the minds of your children, you would not have this room crowded with children. The fact is that the demand for education in Bombay will not rest content with the pedantic definition of primary instruction which suits some other provinces of India. The people of Western India have outgrown the standards which in Bengal, I am told, are still sufficient to satisfy the requirements of primary education. The same reflection is suggested by the fourth point which I notice in your memorial. In other parts of India, nay, even in this Presidency outside the cities, little girls are not actually bribed to come to school, but undoubtedly they would not care if fees were charged. You, on the other hand, charge a rupee or eight annas a month, and your schools are filled to overflowing. In short, female education in this so-called backward province has a value, and parents are prepared to pay for it. There is no more practical test of the existence of a real demand for education than the fact that people will make a pecuniary sacrifice to secure it. I doubt if any State school would continue to exist if girls were charged the fees which here are readily paid, and I accept this fact as another proof of the confidence which the Parsi community feels in an institution which is managed by their own selected committee. It seems to me that this institution teaches us the only road to success in developing female education. Whatever opinions may be held

about the value of State management in colleges, high schools, or primary schools for boys, I feel sure that the reasonable fears and susceptibilities which each community feels in the matter of female education can only be overcome by enlisting, not merely the sympathy but the actual management of girls' schools by members of each community. *Quasi* public boards, whether municipal or local fund, cannot be trusted in a field where Government have hitherto had but moderate success. We want no mixed committees, no divided interests. The work must be entrusted to the leaders of each community, and only to such leaders as the community itself selects, because of their special interest in female education. If such committees will come forward, I feel sure that the Department will give them substantial aid, and remove all interference. Your wealth and independence have enabled you to dispense even with grants-in-aid. Other less fortunate communities may require that aid, and I see no reason why it should not be given without any conditions which will interfere with your free selection of teachers and systems of instruction."

In connection with these schools it is but right to notice prominently the names of those who have by their personal exertions largely contributed to their success. Mr. Framji Nasarvanji Patel, who was one of the four Parsi gentlemen who, without their names being known, supported the Parsi schools while they were under the charge of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, has been the president of the Association from its commencement, and, in addition to frequent handsome donations, has most efficiently fulfilled the responsibilities of his office. Mr. Hirjibhai Hormasji Sethna has always creditably performed the duties of the office of vice-president. Mr. Kharshedji Nasarvanji Kama, who was another of these four

gentlemen, has been from the first the honorary treasurer of the Association, and one of the most active members of the Managing Committee. It is only right to add that in the days of Mr. Kharshedji Kama's prosperity there was hardly a single educational or other institution whose objects were not furthered by his handsome and liberal contributions. He was the patron of educated men. In all their difficulties they went to him for advice, and if they had any project to carry out for the good of the people, they had only to give him a hint in order to receive pecuniary assistance. The first Parsi reformers would hardly have been able to accomplish half the good which they effected without Mr. Kharshedji Nasarvanji Kama's encouragement and support. Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, C.I.E., who was the first honorary secretary, has also been one of the most indefatigable members of the Committee of Management. In fact, all the members of the Committee may be truthfully said to take a warm interest in the schools under their charge.

Besides the before-mentioned schools, as we have said already, there are also schools in Bombay and Surat for the instruction of Parsi girls in connection with the Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai Parsi Benevolent Institution, which are attended by about nine hundred girls.

In all the girls' schools we have mentioned the

reader will have noticed that the instruction imparted therein is in Gujarati, the vernacular of the Parsis. We are glad to say that English is now finding a place in their course of instruction. In connection with the subject of female education it is worthy of remark that among the natives of India, at all events among those of Western India, the Parsi girls were the first to learn English. Before the schools were opened wherein English is at present taught to native girls, a few Parsi families had introduced English education into their homes. But to a Parsi gentleman is due the credit and honour of having established a seminary where a knowledge of English was imparted. We refer to Mr. Manakji Kharshedji Shroff, formerly a judge of the Court of Small Causes at Bombay, a man who has been in many respects in advance of his co-religionists. He has thrice visited Europe, and is well known to many men of note in England. He was the first native of India to have been enrolled as a member of the Royal Asiatic Society.[1] In the year 1863 he established an

[1] "*Royal Asiatic Society.*—At the General Meeting of this Society, held at two o'clock on Saturday the 17th January, Sir Henry Willock in the chair, Manakji Kharshedji, a highly-respected native Parsi gentleman of Bombay, was unanimously elected a non-resident member. This is the first instance in which the Society has drawn into its body a native of India, and may be regarded as an auspicious evidence of the desire of the better class of natives to associate with us in the work of social and of moral improvement."—*The Atlas, London, 25th January* 1835.

English school for native girls, and started a subscription list for its support and maintenance, heading it himself with a handsome donation of four thousand rupees.

The school was named the Alexandra Native Girls' Institution, after Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, in commemoration of Her Royal Highness's marriage with the future King of England and Emperor of India. Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen-Empress has, it is understood, taken a lively interest in the progress of the Institution, not only because it is named after her beloved daughter, but because of Her Majesty's well-known solicitude for the advancement and happiness of her Indian subjects, and particularly for the success of every scheme calculated to raise the position of women in the scale of civilisation.

With the object of raising funds for building a schoolhouse for the Institution, its indefatigable founder, Mr. Manakji, resolved upon holding a bazaar, and in furtherance of that object solicited a contribution from Her Most Gracious Majesty, who was, however, unable to comply, as it might have led to similar applications from other deserving quarters; but the Duchess of Roxburgh, in a letter dated Osborne, 16th January 1868, informed Mr. Manakji that Her Majesty's interest in the "success of the Alexandra Institution is, I assure you, very great

. . . and I am commanded to say that the Princesses will forward something in the way of drawings, etc., to prove their Royal Highnesses' goodwill towards the excellent undertaking." This bazaar was held in the year 1870. It was the most attractive ever witnessed in Bombay, on account of the many inestimable contributions from royalty. Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales made a contribution in the shape of a handsome gold watch. The Princess Louise graciously sent a picture drawn by Her Royal Highness's own hands. Her Majesty the Queen of Prussia sent a vase and a *dejeuner* of porcelain, accompanied by her "best wishes for the success of the noble Institution." Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha sent a set of Gotha china manufacture. Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess of Prussia was graciously pleased to present four albums, with impressions from pictures of Her Royal Highness, representing Prussian soldiers during a campaign, as well as two photographs of Her Royal Highness in tortoise-shell frames, and six albums containing the photographs of their Royal Highnesses the Crown Prince, Crown Princess, and their children. Her Imperial Highness the Duchess of Oldenburg contributed a carpet, and their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of Cambridge and the Princess Mary Adelaide sent some beautiful things worked by their own hands. Her Imperial Majesty

the Empress of the French also graciously favoured the bazaar with a handsome contribution of a beautiful counterpane which she had worked herself.

The bazaar, thus enriched by such handsome and valuable contributions from the most lofty and high-placed ladies of Europe, was opened in the year 1870 by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, at that time travelling in Bombay. On that occasion a large number of richly-dressed native ladies and girls, varying in age from six to thirteen years, were present. It was a sight which can only be seen in Bombay, and His Royal Highness was much gratified at a spectacle which presented itself to him for the first time during his travels in the East.[1]

[1] "Yesterday, at a quarter to 5 P.M., His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, accompanied by His Excellency the Governor and members of staff, visited the Framji Kavasji Institute, where the girls of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution were accommodated in the hall, and where a large number of Parsi ladies were present in the hope of seeing the Duke of Edinburgh. Half an hour later, in the same hall, the annual exhibition for the distribution of prizes to the girls of the Institution was to take place; and the arrangements at the moment of the Prince's visit had therefore been satisfactorily completed in every respect. In the hall were also exhibited, on well-appointed tables, the various articles intended for the fancy bazaar in connection with the Institution, which commences this afternoon at 2 P.M. A large number of European ladies and gentlemen were also present, attracted more especially by the Prince's intended visit. His Royal Highness and His Excellency the Governor on entering proceeded to the centre of the hall, and heard an English song sung by the girls of the Institution. A recitation in English was then given by Miss D. F. Kama and Miss Ramchandar Balcrishna, in a distinct and clear tone, and the ease and fluency with which the passages were delivered showed

The school, started under such auspices and support, soon flourished. Bombay has the credit of being the place where were imparted in a public school for the first time the elements of an English education under the superintendence of English ladies. It has now been in existence for twenty years, and many of the Parsi ladies who speak English received their education in this seminary. To Mr. Manakji Kharshedji is therefore due the credit of having created a love for English education amongst the Parsis, and, still more, of having provided facilities for its

that they had made creditable progress in their study of the English language. At this stage of the proceedings an incident occurred which, depicting as it did a peculiar native custom adopted on festive occasions, could not fail to attract the notice of Europeans. In front of the Prince went and stood two Parsi ladies, Mrs. Kharshedji Kavasji Bhandupvala and Mrs. Bamanji Kharshedji Kama, the one with a gold embroidered scarf from Benares in her hand, and the other with a garland of flowers. One after another they put the scarf and the garland round His Royal Highness's neck. The latter lady, after putting the garland, performed a manipulation of the hands peculiar among the natives, which is a sign of great affection and esteem. It is invariably resorted to on the occasion of the performance of marriage ceremonies, when the mother of the bride, standing on the threshold of her door, bids the bridegroom, her son-in-law, enter her house with the message of happiness and prosperity. It is done by putting the palms of both hands to the cheeks and making a cracking noise by pressing the fingers and bending the finger-joints sharply backwards. This part of the ceremony seemed greatly to astonish the Prince, who must have been highly gratified when he heard of the pleasant significance attached to it. A round of cheers, deep and continued, greeted the Prince on his arrival, which were repeated with greater zeal as His Royal Highness left the Institute to proceed to the spot near the bazaar gate where the foundation-stone of a new Sailors' Home was to be laid."—*Times of India*, 18th March 1870.

attainment. Since the establishment of his school many Parsi families, who have been unwilling to send their girls out, have commenced to teach them English in their own houses through English governesses. Parsi girls have of late made considerable progress in English music. The performances of some of them on the piano as well as their singing have been admired by European critics. We are happy to say that Parsi girls now consider that music is an accomplishment without which a lady's education cannot be said to be complete.

Having thus shown the origin, progress, and present state of education among the Parsis, both male and female, the author, as a Parsi, feels proud in being able to record that education among them has made rapid strides within a period of half a century —for it can only be said to have begun at the commencement of the present century—and that the results attained are in the highest degree satisfactory. In this matter, as well as in much else, they have shown themselves to be far in advance of the other races of the peninsula.

In the report of the census of 1881 will be found extensive tables giving interesting information regarding education. Its author, Dr. Weir, in an analysis of the comparative state of education in 1872 and 1881, and where referring to the state and advance of education amongst the Parsi race,

writes :—" Examining education according to faith or class, we find that education is most extended amongst the Parsi people ; female education is more diffused amongst the Parsi population than any other class." And again, analysing the returns of education of the general population, he writes :—" Contrasting these results with education at an early age amongst Parsis, we find 12·2 per cent Parsi male and 8·84 per cent female children, under six years of age, under instruction ; between six and fifteen the number of Parsi male and female children under instruction is much larger than in any other class. Over fifteen years of age the *smallest* proportion of illiterate, either male or female, is found in the Parsi population." This is a tribute to the enlightened spirit of our race—to the enlightened views of the scattered fragments which, after many vicissitudes and heroic struggles, have become united and acquired cohesion under the beneficent influence of civilisation.

In connection with the subject of education it would be a distinct omission to pass over the share of the Parsis in the newspaper press. In no other pursuit are they more conspicuous. The first newspaper in Gujarati, the *Bombay Samachar*, was started by a Parsi, Mr. Fardunji Marzbanji, the father of the present enterprising proprietors of the *Daftar Ashkara* press, the *Rast Goftar* newspaper, and other periodicals.

The first type-founder in the vernacular language was a Parsi, the late Mr. Beramji Jijibhai Chapgar. In former years all publishing work was done by lithography. The first compositor in English was also a Parsi. In conducting the vernacular newspapers in Bombay the Parsis stand foremost. For a long time they had the monopoly of publishing newspapers and doing general printing work. The Marathi papers and printing establishments, though conducted with ability and possessing much influence, are a growth of recent years. The first native who was employed as a manager of an English newspaper was a Parsi. The first native reporter upon the staff of an English newspaper was a member of the same race, who was subsequently promoted to the post of manager and sub-editor. At the present day the manager of the *Bombay Gazette* is a Parsi, Mr. Jehangir Beramji Marzban, a grandson of the founder of the vernacular press in Bombay. As newspaper work increased in Bombay with the general progress of the city, the reporting staff was brought out from England, but Parsis are also still employed as shorthand reporters. The *Times of India*, which was the first English newspaper in Bombay worthy of the name, included among its proprietors the leading Parsis of the time. The most popular vernacular literature is chiefly cultivated by the Parsis, and disseminated far and wide through their agency for the good of the people.

In novel and dramatic writing, as it is understood in Europe, Parsis have of late shown considerable aptitude.

The first Gujarati magazine was started by a Parsi, Mr. Naorozji Fardunji, one of the most worthy and painstaking citizens of Bombay. The Gujarati press, conducted by the Parsis, exercises much influence on local politics, and is regarded with favour by the Government. The number of daily and weekly newspapers and monthly and other periodicals conducted by Parsis exceeds those published in the other vernaculars, and, considering their small number as compared with the other sects in Bombay, it speaks a great deal for the desire of the Parsis to acquire knowledge.

END OF VOL. I.

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